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VENERATION

OF

THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Her Feasts, Prayers, Religious Orders, and Sodalities

BY

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ADAPTED BY

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VENERATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

PART I.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in General.

CHAPTER I.

Why the Blessed Virgin is Honored in the Catholic Church.

It may surprise you somewhat, Christian reader, to have the question asked: "Why is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, honored by the holy Catholic Church, and loved and venerated by all her faithful members?" Doubtless you yourself, from your early years, since the hour when you first awoke from the unconsciousness of infancy to the use of reason, have felt in your inmost soul the existence and the necessity of such devotion. From that time till the present, you have known and practised it as something very dear to you and very holy: as something very natural and easily understood. But it is useful for you to know the reasons for this devotion, which is so manifold in itself, and so

universally practised in the Catholic Church. Thus you will be in a better condition to explain the practice. Not only to yourself, and for your own private edification and sanctification, but to others likewise you may be able to interpret and advocate it more intelligently, more zealously, and more profitably. For this veneration given to Mary by us Catholics has been rejected by her enemies as something superstitious and even idolatrous.

I. GOD HIMSELF, BY HIS OWN EXAMPLE, HAS TAUGHT US TO HONOR MARY.

Once more, Christian reader, review in spirit the life of our dear Queen of heaven, of this glorious Mother of God. Could the Almighty God have done more for her than He has done? Could He have shown to her greater honor? Had He not from all eternity predestined her and chosen her for the sublimest dignity? Did He not make use of inspired prophecies and noble prototypes, in order to awaken, centuries in advance, the respect of men for her worth, as well as their ardent longings for her appearance on earth? Did He not keep these desires of the people alive until the very hour of her birth?

At her entrance into the world, did He not show her a most extraordinary mark of distinction, by preserving her, alone among all mortals, from the stain of original sin? Have not nature and grace seemed to vie one with the other in order to adorn this noblest of all creatures with the whole wealth of the loftiest prerogatives? Did not Divine Providence, with holy care, watch over its cherished ward, from her very first breath, in order to shield her from all danger and to mould her into a perfect model of every virtue? Was not this humble handmaid of the Lord most reverently saluted in the name of the

Most High, and declared full of grace, by a prince from the heavenly court, the archangel Gabriel? And then the honor of being selected to be the Mother of God! The Eternal Father chose her to be the Mother, the nurse, the preceptress, guide and guardian of the Saviour of the world, of that Jesus before whom all knees are to bend on the earth and under the earth.

And how did her Son reverence and honor her? Son of the Eternal God as He was, did He not love, honor and obey His Mother all through His life on earth? Was He not "subject" to her? Did He not dwell beneath the same roof with her, eat at the same table, share even her household duties and labors? Was it not out of tender regard for her that He performed His first miracle? When dying on the cross, did He not confide her to the care of His best beloved disciple, St. John, in order that this disciple might for the future serve and guard her in the name of her departed Son?

Is not this enough, Christian reader? Then raise your eyes still higher. With sentiments of mingled joy and humility, dare to lift your eyes to the gentle maiden of Nazareth, who now, henceforth, and forever, reigns gloriously and benignly on an exalted throne in heaven, as the daughter of God the Father, the Mother of God the Son, the spouse of the Holy Ghost, the temple of the Holy Trinity, the Queen of all the angels and saints, the celestial dispenser of graces, the protectress and advocate of the holy Catholic Church, and of all men in need. In this manner has an all-just God honored the Blessed Virgin. He has bestowed this honored throne upon her for all eternity. He has left to the world His own example of rendering veneration to His blessed Mother.

How then can the unbeliever reproach you, Christian

reader, with ignorant superstition and even blasphemy to God, because you are devoted with childlike love and reverence to this favorite daughter of Heaven, because in your devotional practices you make this sentiment known, or because in your needs of body and soul you have recourse to her?

2. MARY ON HER OWN ACCOUNT, MERITS OUR VENERATION.

To the extraordinary gifts of grace granted by God to the Blessed Virgin, she corresponded most faithfully, most humbly, most zealously. Most energetically did she co-operate with each and every grace, in order thus to sanctify herself. Aye, she corresponded with Heaven's graces most heroically, by suffering bravely and willingly the seven-edged sword of grief foretold by Simeon. Thus is her soul the holiest, the most like unto God, and more than any other soul endowed with personal merits.

We are all called to perfection. Guided and assisted by grace, we are to ascend, by our own individual efforts, the ladder of Christian virtues. On the highest step of this ladder stands the Queen of all saints, resplendent in the beauty and brilliancy of her virtues. It is not reasonable for the unbeliever to find fault with the Christian, who, slowly and painfully climbing this ladder, and full of admiration and confidence, lifts his eyes and hands to her. She in her turn, willingly and lovingly holds out her motherly arms to support and assist the struggling Christian who would otherwise sink and fall back in despondency.

In the great plan and work of the redemption of mankind, Mary was not merely an unconscious and neutral agent, like the manger of Bethlehem, or the cross on

Calvary. No, she gave her free assent and consent to the same, pronouncing the ever-memorable fiat, "Be it done according to Thy word." To the Redeemer she cheerfully supplied His sacred humanity, His precious blood and sacred flesh, in order that He might form His own body therefrom. Who dares to say that this living ark of the New Covenant does not merit our love and veneration?

3. WE OWE TO MARY RESPECT AND LOVE.

What is there that mankind does not owe to the poor young maiden of Nazareth? She is the pride, the ornament, the crown of humanity. Out of love for us she conquered the almost invincible repugnance of her humble heart, and sacrificed her love of retirement and her quiet, secluded life, to assume the manifold duties and trials of a mother in a family. She it is who gave us our greatest Good, the Saviour of the world, with whom and by whom came to us hope, plenitude of grace, and salvation. It was out of love, not only for her beloved Son, but also for us that she stood beneath the cross three long hours in indescribable anguish of soul. There it was that she willingly and cheerfully took upon herself the duties, the sorrows and the affections of a mother of all mankind. And shall it not be permitted to us on our own part to entertain for her a corresponding feeling of veneration, gratitude and reciprocal love, such as grateful children should entertain for the best of mothers and the most generous of friends?

More abundant than the countless rays of the sun, more enriching than its warming and fructifying light, more beneficial and life-giving than the refreshing showers to the parched earth, are the benefits and blessings which

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descend without interruption from the grace-throne of the heavenly Queen, upon the cold, infirm and languishing hearts of men. Without intermission she watches with a mother's anxious eyes over the Catholic Church, and over each one of its believing members. Her gentle mother-heart throbs with unceasing desire to help and forgive. Her very presence in heaven is a never-ending, vigilant and effective personal intercession for her children who dwell in this vale of tears. And the heretic would forbid us to show grateful hearts for all these valuable and countless benefits of salvation, or even to try to repay them with confidence and veneration!

4. GOD HIMSELF SANCTIONS AND REWARDS RESPECT FOR MARY.

The most high God has not only given us Himself the example of honoring the Blessed Virgin, but He proves also in reality and in deed that a confident and reverential feeling on the part of man towards His Mother is pleasing to Himself.

Whence does it come that every truly Catholic heart on this globe, has, during all ages of Christianity, turned to the blessed Mother of God, in every necessity, in every trial and tribulation of body and soul? It comes from the universal experience, and the firmly admitted belief, that our merciful God is always willing to hear, accept, and grant our prayers, when they make their way to the foot of His throne by the intervention of His blessed Mother. Therefore, if our veneration of Mary and our recourse to her were not in accordance with the wish and will of God, He would not hear petitions brought to Him in that manner. Those persons, therefore, who reject veneration to God's Mother as being displeasing to God,

charge the majesty of God with the horrible imputation that, by hearkening to our prayers when brought by Mary, it justifies and encourages superstition and the deification of creatures.

5. VENERATION TO MARY FURTHERS THE GLORY OF GOD.

Self-appointed zealots for the glory of God pretend that devotion to Mary is derogatory to the homage due to God.

"The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Ps. xviii. 1). A very heaven was Mary, for she was the dwelling-place of God. Hence "she declareth the glory of God." She is the firmament in which and from which the divine Sun of Justice shone forth in the great mystery of the Incarnation. Thus she shows forth the work of her Creator's hands. Mary is a shining mirror in which all her own prerogatives, and every distinction bestowed by us upon her, are reflected back on their origin, which is God.

With prophetic foresight the simple handmaid of the Lord foresaw and foretold her future position in Christian history: "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Not to herself, however, nor to her own merits, does she ascribe this glory, but to the most high God. She says, "for He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid: . . . He that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy is His name" (Luke i. 48–49).

And why do we Catholics venerate so profoundly a weak human creature? Because she is the Mother of God. Because God has honored her with many graces

and distinguished privileges. Because God has been pleased to allow the greater benefits and graces to come to us through her. To God then as the final object goes all our own respect for the blessed Mother. But they who despise the Mother Mary, do they really know how to worship God properly? Does not the neglect which they show to the Mother fall also upon the Son? If the Saviour accepts as being done to Himself every good deed that we do to the least among men, will He not much more accept all the honor and love given to His Mother as His own, and all the disrespect and coldness shown to that beloved Mother as shown to Him also?

6. BOTH THE FRIENDS AND THE OPPONENTS OF DEVOTION TO MARY STRENGTHEN US IN THE SAME.

Just as the divine Son is set for the resurrection and the fall of many, and as a sign of contradiction (Luke ii. 34), so has the blessed Mother had at all times devout clients and mean enemies. And which of these two parties has chosen the better part?

Search, Christian reader, through the history of Christendom, examine the lives of Christians: you will find that in those ages, in those lands, and in those Christian creeds, in which devotion to our blessed Lady exists and flourishes, there, too, exist and flourish a firm faith, holy love for God, pure morals, and Christian heroism. In a word, virtue has ever flourished and does still flourish where devotion to Mary is practised. In the pages of this book, Christian reader, there will be presented to your view an array of zealous clients of Mary, from different periods of time, and under every variety of circum-

stance. Study their lives, their deeds, their noble sentiments, and in every case you will be filled with esteem and admiration for them. Were not the greatest saints —those men who are really great in the eyes of God—were they not zealous advocates and practisers of devotion to Mary?

What is the state of spiritual affairs among those so-called Christians who erect no altar to the Blessed Virgin, who know neither "Hail Mary," nor the Rosary, nor any other devotion to the Mother of God? Not only are they deprived of much that is encouraging, and consequently beneficial and educating in these pious practices, but they are also, if we may believe the testimony of history, liable to fall into spiritual frigidity and infirmity. They lack interior vigor and fruitfulness. They soon come to resemble very much a family that is deprived of the characteristic, gentle and fruitful influence of an affectionate mother. Even in the Catholic Church itself there have been times when, in certain places, perhaps owing to scandals and other causes, foolish or wicked individuals have inveighed loudly and zealously against devotion to Mary and all its manifold outward manifestations, such as the holy Rosary, pious pilgrimages, confraternities and others. But did true piety and sincere worship to the one true God become more strong and flourishing amid this opposition to the Mother of God? Was the attendance at Mass more numerous and edifying? Were the sacraments approached more regularly and frequently? You yourself, Christian reader, may be able to answer this question. Among your own acquaintances, have you not always found, if you have ever ventured to form an opinion of them, that the best-living Christians are always the most devout servants of Mary?

And even yourself, dear Christian, at those periods in your life, and in those conditions of your soul, when you found most pleasure and happiness in serving God, in treading in the path of His law and His love, was it not at such times that you experienced the most zealous love and respect for your blessed Mother, and were most devoted to her service?

Perhaps, dear Christian, these few reasons, which from among countless others equally strong, I have brought to your attention, may have the happy effect of encouraging you and urging you on anew to a still greater practical devotion to your blessed Mother. They may also serve you as weapons of defense against all those who would seek to disturb you in those cherished practices of piety, and mock you for honoring her whom God Himself was pleased to honor.

CHAPTER II.

Nature of the Devotion to Mary, as Taught and Practised in the Catholic Church.

THE Blessed Virgin Mary having been conceived, alone among all other children of men, without the stain of original sin, and having been chosen from among all the daughters of Adam to be made the Mother of God, she assumes, in the economy of Christian salvation, a peculiar and exalted position, belonging exclusively to herself. To her, therefore, belongs a special and distinguished veneration. In order, Christian reader, that you may rightly understand this practice of Catholics, you will lay well to heart: first, that Mary is not entitled to that degree of homage or worship which belongs to God alone; secondly, that she is entitled to the same veneration which the Catholic Church gives to the other saints of God; thirdly, that to her, as being Queen of all the saints, and just because of this exalted position, there belong special modes of respect which those saints have not in common with her.

1. ADORATION OR WORSHIP NOT TO BE GIVEN TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Infinitely exalted above all His creatures is the great Creator. Compared with His infinite holiness, all human excellence, even that of the Blessed Virgin itself, is full of defects and imperfections. In presence of His infi-

nitely glorious majesty, we must all bow down in our humility and with heart-felt sighs exclaim, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" (Ps. viii. 5).

To Him, therefore alone, "to the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Tim. i. 17). This honor, this respect, this service, which we testify and give to God, and to Him only, is what is termed worship or adoration, and is described in theology by the word "latria."

According to the teaching of that eminent theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas, who is always "the angelic doctor of the Church," adoration or worship is an act of virtue and of respect for God, whereby, while adverting to and recognizing the supreme dignity and the infinite majesty of God, as well as acknowledging our own dependence on Him, we wish to be subject to God, and avow this subjection. The act of worship thus contains four things: first, a recognition and an advertency of the created intellect to the supreme excellence of God on the one side, and a corresponding recognition of the unworthiness of the creature, on the other; secondly, a practical avowal that it is just and proper to offer to God reverence and proofs of our homage, because His majesty is so supremely exalted and His excellence so perfect, and because the creature is in such a state of lowliness and of dependence on Him; thirdly, assent and consent, and a perfectly voluntary submission of our will, by reason of the infinite excellence of God and of His most sublime perfections, to remain in our subjection to Him, and in our dependence on Him; fourthly, a testimony and a sign, by which we give to understand that we submit ourselves of our own free will to God, and are willing to

depend on Him in all circumstances and for all things. The external act of adoration consists in bending the knee, prostrations on the ground, or even acts purely internal and mental, but expressing the genuine act of adoration from a creature to his Creator.

From all this, dear Christian reader, you may see clearly that strict adoration is an act of religion which belongs peculiarly and exclusively to God alone, because He alone is the only eternal, independent, perfect Being, Lord, Creator, and Upholder of all things, and in Himself is infinitely happy and blessed. For Mary, too, as well as for every other creature, God is Lord, Creator, Sustainer, and Comforter. The veneration, then, that we bestow upon her, is founded upon the excellence which she received from God, upon her election to the motherhood of God, which was granted to her by the Eternal Father, as well as upon her own merits, which also she acquired by the help of God's grace.

2. THE VENERATION GIVEN TO THE SAINTS IS DUE ALSO TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Although strict adoration belongs exclusively to the Supreme Lord of the universe, proper and suitable veneration, paid to the friends and servants of God, is not forbidden. On this point the Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches: "Were a king to prohibit, by proclamation, any individual to assume the regal character or to accept the honors due to the royal person, how unreasonable to infer from such an edict a prohibition that suitable honor and respect should be paid to his magistrates! . . . Holy men who adored one God only are also said in Scripture to have 'adored,' that is, supplicated and venerated, kings. If then kings, by whose agency God governs the world

are so highly honored, shall it be deemed unlawful to honor those angelic spirits whom God has been pleased to constitute His ministers, whose service He makes use of, not only in the government of His Church, but also of the universe, by whose invisible aid we are every day delivered from the greatest dangers of soul and body? Are they not, rather, worthy a veneration greater in proportion as the dignity of these blessed spirits exceeds that of kings? Another claim on our veneration is their love of us, which, as the Scripture informs us (Dan. x. 13), prompts them to pour out their prayers for those countries over which they are placed by Providence, and for us, whose guardians they are, and whose prayers and tears they present before the throne of God (Tob. xii. 12; Apoc. viii. 3)."

"True, there is but one Mediator, Christ the Lord—who alone has reconciled us through His blood (1 Tim. ii. 5), and who, having accomplished our redemption, and having once entered into the Holy of holies, ceases not to intercede for us (Heb. ix. 12, vii. 25); but it by no means follows that it is unlawful, therefore, to have recourse to the intercession of the saints. If, because we have one Mediator, Christ Jesus, it were unlawful to ask the intercession of the saints, the Apostle would not have recommended himself with so much earnestness to the prayers of his brethren on earth. In His capacity as Mediator, the prayers of the living should derogate from the glory and dignity of Christ not less than the intercession of the saints in heaven." (Cat. Council of Trent, Part. III., Chap. 2).

Such, Christian reader, is the Catholic doctrine in regard to the veneration and invocation of the saints of God. It is the same that has been taught by the Church during all ages, and strenuously defended by her against

all the attacks of her opponents. To the faithful it has ever been an inexhaustible fountain of grace and an unfailing source of consolation.

And shall not the saintly Mother of God be allowed to enjoy a share of this veneration and invocation, which is allowed to all the other saints and even counselled by the Church? Once granted and believed that we may and ought to venerate the saints of God, it necessarily follows that such veneration belongs in the first place to those who have an undoubted right to stand first in their ranks, and who were distinguished by the abundance of graces which they received, by their intimate union with God, by their spirit of self-sacrifice, and by their general holiness of life. Christian reader, soar aloft on the wings of truth, search throughout all the mansions of the blessed, and find, if you can, any soul that stands nearer to the throne of God, and stands there by a better right, than the Virgin "full of grace," in whom the Lord hath done great things. For He is mighty, and holy is His name.

Multiplied, varied, and untiring have been the efforts made by the enemies of the Catholic Church and of Mary, her Queen, to impugn our doctrine and to condemn our pious practices on this point. But no heretic has yet dared to advance the proposition that while men are permitted to respect the memory of the saints and to seek their aid, yet that the Blessed Virgin has not merited and is not worthy of a share in this devotion.

3. TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN IS DUE A SPECIAL DEVOTION.

To God alone is supreme worship due. To the saints belongs veneration. But to the blessed Mother of God we owe a special devotion, peculiarly her own.

You must, dear Christian reader, find this truth one of the easiest to be understood. Why should I seek to prove it to you, from the personal holiness and extraordinary dignity and excellence of the woman who was chosen to be God's Mother? From the countless array of pious and learned Fathers of the Church who have written on this subject, I shall cite but one, Isidore, bishop of Thessalonica, who thus dilates on the superiority of Mary over every other child of Adam: "I state and assert in a few words, to the Blessed Virgin Mary belong prerogatives that are inconceivable to the understanding and beyond the power of the human tongue to express. She is superior to all other creatures. I may say, without fear of uttering heresy, that she, more than all the other wonders of nature combined, is calculated to lead men to a knowledge of God's power and glory. And if from the beginning neither the angels nor the firmament, nor the heavenly bodies, nor the earth, nor the sea had been created, yet men would have attained to a good and true knowledge of the attributes of God, by the very appearance among them of this incomparable Virgin-Mother. And indeed all those grand and beautiful works of creation, even the sublimest and best endowed, when compared with that Queen who gave birth to the King of all, and thus brought to all the greatest good, pale so much before her that we cannot comprehend her exaltation. If, therefore, no other work of creation were in existence, this brightest and purest Virgin would be all-sufficient to give as much honor and as much praise to the divine creative Majesty, as if all the rest of creation were there. But I may also say that the other great works in creation were brought into existence that it might be made evident to what a high degree Mary was

distinguished above them all; or to speak otherwise and more truly, that other creatures might be present on which God's brilliant operations might be made manifest through her."

To such an extent is the venerable Virgin the wonder of wonders, the miracle of miracles. Nothing that exists, God alone excepted, is grander or more beautiful than she.

Since, therefore, the Blessed Virgin excels all other created beings, and is lifted up above the holiest—since she it is who comes nearest to God—is it not just and proper, Christian reader, that the respect shown to her by men should bear some proportion to her exalted state and position, to her transcendent virtues? Should not our respect for her be proportioned to the benefit for which, in a special manner, we are indebted to her? Was it not she who gave us Our Saviour? Should not our devotion to her correspond to the graces, favors and benefits of salvation? All these we have received from God through her powerful intercession. In short, should not this devotion to Mary form the fairest, most lovely and loving, most interior and most blessed spiritual occupation of every Christian soul?

Yes, all hail, O Mary! Be thou forever honored and called blessed. Thou art full of grace, more saintly than the saints, more glorious than the cherubim, more excellent than any other creature. O, purest of Virgins, most deserving art thou of all honor. Treasure of innocence, jewel of sanctity, thou who surpasseth the nature of all created things, lead us to God. By thy most powerful intercession, so pleasing to God, and on account of thy mother's claims, so irresistible, lead us to thy Son, Our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

Origin of the Devotion to Mary in the Catholic Church.

In God's Church devotion to Mary flourishes everywhere, grand, glorious and rich in Heaven's blessings. Among true Catholics, the festivals of Mary are days of happiness and joy. The grandest temples rear aloft their majestic proportions in her honor. Many confraternities joyfully take upon themselves the pleasant duty of practising Mary's virtues and of diffusing this practice among their fellow-men. The noblest works of the most skilful artists have sprung forth out of an enthusiastic love for the holy Virgin. But was it always thus in the Catholic Church? This may be your inquiry, dear Christian reader.

The enemies of Mary and of her devotion, declare that these practices are but the unwholesome fruit of an unsound and enthusiastic piety belonging to the dark ages and that, by means of this idolatrous worship, and by other senseless practices as reprehensible as this idolatrous worship of creatures, evangelical truth, and the Church of Christ itself, which up to that time had been kept pure and unchanged, became hidden and was finally lost under the tattered garment of error. Such is the assertion which they make: on them rests the impossible task of proving it.

To us it is an easy and pleasant task to refute this

false assertion. We have only to adduce proofs from history to show that devotion to Mary existed in the first and purest ages of Christianity, and that it has grown and flourished in the Church down to our own day.

I. MARY WAS HONORED DURING HER OWN LIFETIME.

To convince you of this truth, dear Christian reader, it is but necessary for me to remind you of only a few incidents in the life of the holy Mother of God. Even before her appearance on this earth, she was honored by the glorious prophecies of the Old Testament uttered concerning her, and more especially by the glorious prototypes who prefigured her. Mary was honored and revered by her own venerable parents, as an extraordinary gift from Heaven and a pledge of divine grace. Mary was honored by St. Joseph, who was obedient and devoted to her, and was the witness of her holy life. Mary was honored by the archangel Gabriel, who honored her with a salutation from high Heaven and addressed her with the honorable titles of "full of grace" and Mother of God. Mary was honored by her cousin Elizabeth, as "the Mother of the Lord." Mary was honored by the forerunner of Christ, St. John the Baptist, who leaped in his mother's womb at the presence of the Mother of God. Mary was honored by the holy apostles, whose life and soul and centre she was in the room at Jerusalem, when they were awaiting the coming of the Holy Ghost.

Yes, this humble maiden of Nazareth herself, when filled with the Holy Ghost and enlightened by His wisdom, gave of herself the most genuine testimony that till the end of time she was to be the object of the special praise and the blessings of generations. This truth she

declared solemnly, when uttering the familiar words in the inspired canticle of the *Magnificat*, "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." (Luke i. 48.)

2. DEVOTION TO MARY IN THE FIRST CENTURIES PROVED FROM MONUMENTS OF ANTIQUITY.

Glorious was the Blessed Virgin in her death. Her assumption was no less glorious. At once in the hearts of the mourning apostles and other believers, their respect for the Mother of Jesus was augmented by a sacred and profound longing to rejoin her in heaven. During the days of her pilgrimage on earth the humble spouse of God did not wish and would not tolerate any show of reverence towards herself. But after her translation it was but right and proper that she should take her well-earned place on the altar of public veneration.

Soon many churches were built in her honor. The cathedral at Ephesus, in which was held in the year 431 the Third General Council of the Church, whose pious and learned members in attendance defended so gloriously the title and honor of Mary, was dedicated to that Queen of heaven. (See page 45). In the beginning of the fourth century Peter I. built a sanctuary to Mary at Alexandria. About the same time the Emperor Constantine built another in Gaul. Rome possesses several ancient churches sacred to Mary, among which St. Mary Major, built under Pope Liberius, who died in 366, was the chief and most sumptuous. Besides this, there are other famous ones, among them the Church of St. Mary of the Martyrs, which was the old Roman Pantheon and dedicated to all the pagan deities; St. Mary's beyond the Tiber, and St.

Mary's in the Broad Road. One of the most ancient of the Roman churches dedicated to Mary is the St. Mary's Connedin. It is quite probable that this venerable building was erected by Pope Dionysius somewhere between the years 259 and 269. In the eighth century some Greek Christians, flying from the persecutions of the Iconoclasts, came to Rome, bringing with them a very ancient and piously venerated picture of the Mother of God, which they placed in that church. Pope Adrian I. who died in 795, renovated this building and again dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin. The miraculous picture is still to be seen there, and together with many other existing monuments is accepted as an ocular proof that the Blessed Virgin was honored through pictures in the early ages of Christianity, as well as by the churches erected under her invocation.

Constantinople, too, the capital of the Eastern Empire which was all dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, possessed in very early times many churches consecrated to her. The church built by the holy Empress Pulcheria (d. 453), possessed in the time of the Emperor Leo I. a renowned relic of the Blessed Virgin. This was a veil which had belonged to her, and which was so highly esteemed that it was customary for the inhabitants to carry it in solemn procession in times of public calamity: as during the siege of the city in 821 and at the time of the invasions of the Russians in 865. Such religious processions are known to have been regularly ordered as early as the sixth century by the Emperor Mauritius, who died in 602.

When, during the pontificate of Leo III., the earthquake of the 26th of October, 740, was threatening the city, a procession was formed under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. Ever since that date these processions in

honor of Mary have been continued in the Church. The example of St. Pulcheria was speedily followed by several emperors, empresses, and private individuals, and there arose in quick succession, throughout the city of Constantinople, the renowned churches of St. Mary's of the Fountain, St. Mary's in the Square and many others. During an earthquake which happened in the reign of Justinian I., who died in 565, one of these churches, called Petula, was destroyed. Another was pulled down in 693, by order of the erratic emperor, Justinian II., who used the material in the enlargement of his palace.

In the beginning of the sixth century the holy monk and patriarch, Sabas, built in Palestine a temple in honor of the Blessed Virgin. According to the testimony of Evagrius, there stood in Antioch about that time several churches sacred to Mary. Justinian I. founded one in the holy city of Jerusalem itself and another in Carthage. About the year 540 Bishop Injuriosus erected in Tours a sumptuous church to Mary. Already in the eighth century, Cologne, Mayence and Chur had their churches dedicated to Mary. The Church of Our Lady, in Worms, was one of the most ancient in Germany. The Cathedral of Spire, which is mentioned in authentic documents as early as 664, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St. Stephen. Among the places of pilgrimage consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, you will find several, Christian reader, whose existence dates back to the days of primitive Christianity.

In the catacombs we find a great many pictures of the Blessed Virgin, dating from the first ages of Christianity. These catacombs, as you know, Christian reader, are immense subterranean labyrinths in and around Rome, in which, during times of persecution, the Christians took

refuge, for the purpose of celebrating the divine mysteries, and to entomb the bodies of the martyrs.

Christian reader, enter in spirit, and with holy reverence, into one of these mysterious caverns. Let us choose the catacomb of St. Priscilla. This is a veritable underground sanctuary dating certainly from the second century of Christianity, and it may be from the first. Let us pass in by the so-called Greek chapel. Here you discover, on the roof, a well executed picture. It is the Blessed Virgin holding the divine Infant on her knees, and in the act of accepting the offerings of the three wise men of the East. What a touching and sublime memorial of ancient faith! This self-same picture has been a subject for admiration among learned antiquarians and critical artists, who wonder at the chaste grace and delicacy of expression which is not at all inferior to the best efforts of the most renowned masters. But the believing Catholic derives his chief pleasure and satisfaction from knowing that, in these ancient pictures, he has before him an undeniable proof of the antiquity of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin as practised in his Church. In a neighboring vaulted cave is to be seen the oldest picture of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin. Mary is seated on a kind of throne, and the angel, without wings, and under the appearance of a young man, stands before her, in the act of announcing his mysterious message.

Not far from this last we find still another lovely picture of the blessed Mother with her Child. She is clothed in gracefully flowing undergarment and mantle, and wears on her head the light veil peculiar to virgins dedicated to God. Above her shines the star of Bethlehem. Antiquarians assure us that this beautiful painting must have been executed between the years of 50 and 150,

perhaps under the eyes and direction of the apostles themselves.

Other pictures, equally ancient, represent the holy Mother standing with hands uplifted, and absorbed in prayer, as if for her beloved children in the Church. All the pictures of the Madonna that have been discovered up to the present time, and are known to belong to the first centuries of Christianity, form quite a collection. How many prayers and sighs and supplications and holy vows have been uttered before these images of the Mother of God, from the oppressed and crushed hearts of our forefathers in the faith, and carried up to the real original Mother in heaven!

One other memorial from the catacombs in proof of devotion to Mary, very early devotion, deserves to be mentioned to the Christian reader. Fragments have been found of about four hundred chalices, or round vessels, all of one form, and all worked in gold. On the flat side of each vessel the artist has fastened a leaf of gold, and engraved thereon, with a chisel, various figures and inscriptions. In order to preserve this work he placed over it a covering of glass.

These drinking-cups were formerly used at the Christian love-feasts, called *agapes*, which were held at family gatherings, and especially on the festivals of the saints. The greater number of these glasses show a picture of the blessed Mother in the attitude of prayer, and with the annexed inscription of "Maria," the Latin for Mary. Sometimes the Blessed Virgin is distinguished and designated by a halo of glory about her head. In the beginning, this halo surrounded the head of Jesus only. In the third century we find it encircling the head of Mary, and in the fifth and sixth centuries the images of all the saints.

From these significant decorations of the drinking-cups we may easily learn how devotion to Mary and the commemoration of the various mysteries of her life, held an important place in the early Church, and also how the primitive Christians loved to place Mary above all the angels and saints as being Queen of them all.

From the inscriptions which adorn most of the graves of the saints buried in the catacombs, we perceive that in ancient Christendom it was a favorite custom to confer the name of Mary on those who were baptized, whether they were new-born infants or converts from paganism or Judaism.

CHAPTER IV.

Mary's Titles and Honors Defended in the First Ages of Christianity.

In the daily office of the Blessed Virgin, our holy Mother, the Church, utters these remarkable words, "Virgin Mary, rejoice, for thou alone in the whole world has cast down and broken all heresies." Mary had already by anticipation cast down all the heresies of the whole world, by giving to mankind, in the fruit of her chaste womb, the Way, the Truth and the Life. She has also destroyed heresy throughout the world and throughout all time, by her supplications before the throne of God, by her guidance and protection of Christ's Church, and by virtue of the support and defence which persons exposed to heresy found in her protection.

The heretics of the early ages directed their poisoned arrows almost exclusively against either the divinity or the humanity of Christ or against the sacred person and the work of the Son of Mary. But neither of these two natures in Christ can be assailed, without at the same time calling into question and imperilling, if not destroying, the peculiar maternity of Mary. She was and is the mirror on which are reflected the shadows of the attacks directed against the Son of God. Inasmuch as the honors and the titles, the virginity, the maternity, the im-

maculate conception, in short the entire exalted position occupied by Mary in the great work of salvation and sanctification, all remain unconquered among the assaults of the enemy, and have become the common deposit of Catholic faith, so, too, does she continue to be the victor over darkness and falsehood—she who crushed the serpent's head. In addition to all this we possess from antiquity of Christendom several proofs founded directly on Scripture—written and traditional proofs of the faith then held concerning the Blessed Virgin, concerning her dignity as Virgin Mother, as well as of the consoling devotional practices founded on these high dignities.

I. THE APOSTLES' CREED.

How many times, Christian reader, in the course of your life, you have recited with strong faith and believing sentiments that clear, short and admirable confession of our Catholic faith which we call the Apostles' Creed, and which, according to universal opinion, was composed by the apostles themselves, or at least in the first days of Christianity. In twelve short and comprehensive articles, all easily understood, it expresses the chief sublime truths of our religion. In this confession of our Catholic faith, we acknowledge as divinely revealed and undeniable truth that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. By this same confession have all Christian generations, from the time of the apostles to our day, all worshippers of Jesus Christ, in every age, of every clime and of every tongue, acknowledged the sublime dignity of Mary as Virgin Mother of God and defended this article of faith against all the hostile attacks of unbelievers.

As often, then, Christian reader, as you pronounce the

third article of our creed or confession of faith, namely, "Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary," confess heartily and with joyous faith the sublime prerogatives of your holy protectress.

2. THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.

There are whole libraries of comprehensive books which contain the best written proofs and defences of devotion to Mary, extracted with care and judgment from the writings of the Church Fathers and commentators, since the days of the apostles down to the latest times. For you, Christian reader, it may suffice to cite here a few of these Fathers.

St. Irenæus, Martyr, archbishop of Lyons (d. 202) and a pupil of St. Polycarp, who was himself a disciple of the apostles, undertook to controvert and defeat, in a very learned and able book, all the attacks made against the Catholic Church by the heretics of his time. With dogmatic precision he pointed out in this book the excellence and dignity of Mary, by contrasting her with our mother Eve. He says, "As Eve, by the language of the angel of darkness, was deceived and withdrew herself from God by her disobedience, so was Mary informed and advised by the words of an angel of light that she would carry God in her womb, as a result of her obedience. As the devil had persuaded Eve to abandon God, so did the angel induce Mary to follow God. Thus she became at once the mediatrix for Eve.

"Again, as the whole human race had been subjected to death by a virgin, for such was Eve before the Fall, it was afterwards freed from death's power by a virgin, whose obedience neutralized the disobedience of Eve and made it good. Finally, as the sin of the first man was

cancelled by the sufferings of the Son of God, so did the simplicity of the dove, or Mary, win the victory over the malice of the serpent, in order that we might be liberated from the bonds which had held us captive."

St. Justin, surnamed the Philosopher, (d. 166) had sounded the praises of the Blessed Virgin, even before the time of St. Irenæus. He explains that well-known passage in Holy Scripture, where a woman from the crowd interrupts the Saviour in His teachings and working of miracles, by suddenly crying out, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the breasts that gave Thee suck," whereupon the Son of God, with apparent rebuke, replied, "Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke xi. 27, 28). This doctor of the Church teaches and proves that Mary is the one here praised by the Saviour as having kept the word of God. He writes, "The Saviour, when He uttered the above words, did not deprive His Mother of her legitimate honor, but rather shows by what manner of the maternal right she was the most blessed and happy. For if he who hears the word of God and keeps it, is God's brother and sister and mother, Mary was one and did the other. Therefore His own Mother was necessarily praised and commended, for to hear the word of God and to keep it is the sublime and infallible impulse of virtue and of a pure heart which is entirely and always absorbed in the contemplation of God. As God did not choose the next best woman, but the very best, to be the Mother of God, one who surpassed all other women in virtue, so did He rightfully wish that His Mother should be declared blessed because of the same virtues, on account of which the honor of being chosen Virgin Mother was conferred upon her."

That Christ never on any occasion behaved in a disobedient, disrespectful or harsh manner towards His parents, is clear from what St. Luke, the Evangelist, testifies of Him and them: He came down from Jerusalem and was subject to them.

St. John Chrysostom, the holy and eloquent patriarch of Constantinople (d. 407), eulogizes in his sermons Mary's grand prerogatives, and stirs up devotion to her; and awakens confidence in her with an enthusiasm and power which were altogether peculiar to his own golden heart and golden lips. Thus, once in the presence of an immense congregation, he exclaimed, "It was not a woman of wealth and grandeur that the Son of the living God chose for His Mother, but a lowly virgin whose soul was adorned with every virtue. For as the Blessed Virgin Mary had preserved her virginity in the most stainless and pure condition, she was made worthy to conceive, in her chaste womb, Christ Our Lord. To this most holy Virgin and Mother of God, then, let us have recourse and become participators in the fruits of her powerful intercession.

"Oh, all you who seek to preserve holy purity, fly to this tender and chaste Mother of Our Lord and Master.

"Verily, beloved brethren, the Blessed Virgin Mary was a great wonder-work, for who, among all creatures, has been found greater or more highly distinguished than she? She alone, in sublime exaltation, towers aloft over heaven and earth. What, or who, is more holy than she? Not the prophets, not the angels, not the apostles, not the martyrs, not cherubim and not seraphim. Indeed, among all created beings, visible or invisible, none can be found greater, purer or more glorious. Would you know how much higher the Blessed Virgin stands than all the

heavenly powers? Behold! These stand before the throne of God with fear and trembling, hiding their faces; but Mary approaches the throne of God with confidence and offers the human race to Him whom she has brought forth. Through her, too, we also obtain forgiveness for our sins.

"All hail, then, Virgin Mother. Thou art our heaven and our throne; thou art the ornament, the honor, the brightest jewel of our holy Church. Pray unremittingly for us to Jesus, thy Son and Our Lord, in order that through thee we may find mercy on the day of judgment."

Christian reader, has any speaker or writer, even the most enthusiastic among all the modern panegyrists of Mary, ever dilated more beautifully, more fervently, more eloquently, about our beloved Mother, than this renowned teacher and doctor of the fourth century?

However, on the other hand, the Catholic Church and her divinely guided bishops, even in the first centuries, placed the most cautious safeguards around her sacred deposit of faith. Hence, in regard to the devotion to Mary, she set forth the most exact bounds and used the utmost vigilance in preventing excesses. Such a course was made necessary lest the newly converted Christians, who had been more or less accustomed to idolatry and schooled in it from infancy, should be tempted to mistake the pure and holy Virgin for some pagan goddess. Thus, there arose in Arabia, in the fourth century, a sect composed of women, called Collyriden, who actually tendered divine honors to Mary and offered, in sacrifice to her, a certain kind of peculiarly prepared bread. St. Epiphanius, the bishop of Cyprus (d. 403), with great zeal and holy enthusiasm set his face against this ill-judged and exaggerated exaltation of the Blessed Virgin.

How unfounded, then, Christian reader, is the reproach made by heretics that the Catholic Church gives divine homage to the Mother of God! In all ages her doctors and writers have opposed most vigorously the sin of idolatry. St. Epiphanius writes, "In such devotion, that is, the giving of divine honors to Mary, poisoned as it is with idolatry, we cannot help discovering a devilish invention. The body of Mary was the temple of holiness itself, I admit, but she was not God. Chosen by God, and highly exalted as she was, she is still a woman of the same nature as any other, although the distinguished prerogatives that have made her holy in body and soul were extremely great. This being the case, how could the treacherous poisonous serpent thus lead souls into this error? By what hidden snares did he entrap them and lead them into a labyrinth of superstition? Mary, of course, is to be honored, but only to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is adoration to be offered. The command which God imposed so strictly on our first parents not to eat of the fruit of the tree, did not mean that the evil was in the tree itself, but merely that by occasion of the tree disobedience would be committed.

"Therefore, let no one attempt to taste this new fruit of error which has been produced by ill-judged and excessive homage paid by the thoughtless and ignorant to Mary. Stately and beautiful as was the tree of Paradise, it was not created that man should eat its fruit. Hence, too, excellent, holy and exalted as Mary was and is, worthy of our respect and love, yet we must not offer her the adoration which belongs to God."

CHAPTER V.

Mary, the Mother of God.—The Council of Ephesus.

To prove the extent and nature of the devotion to Mary which was taught and practised in the early Church, we have at our command not only copious writings of the Fathers, and public professions of the faithful, but we have also the history of the serious contests that were maintained against the hellish enemy of truth and his aiders and abettors among men, in their assaults on her dignity and titles. Whenever these prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin were assailed, the whole Catholic Church, the whole Catholic world, was aroused, and every individual Catholic heart took as earnest an interest in the question as if it were a personal matter. With wonder and holy joy, Christian reader, will you be filled on witnessing the remarkable spectacle that I shall portray for your edification, while describing truthfully the condemnation of the Nestorian heresy, pronounced by the bishops assembled in the Council of Ephesus, in the year 431, and the brilliant victory obtained by the Blessed Virgin in consequence of that sentence.

On the 24th of December, 427, the priest Nestorius was chosen to be patriarch of Constantinople. He was an eloquent speaker, and by his sermons had acquired a good reputation. He also wore a semblance of piety, and led

an austere and secluded life. But his eloquence and outward show of virtue were poisoned by an unbounded pride and self-esteem. Owing to his erroneous conception and misunderstanding of the union between the divine and the human natures in the one person of our divine Redeemer, Nestorius was led into the heretical opinion that the Mother of Jesus should not and could not be styled the Mother of God, but only Mother of Christ, or rather Mother of the humanity of Christ! A recently ordained priest, named Anastasius, was the first who dared to announce from the sacred precincts of the pulpit, to the assembled faithful, this heretical proposition. Such an unexpected and unheard-of attack on the teachings of the Catholic faith, and on the title and the dignity of the Mother of God, filled all hearts immediately with consternation, alarm and indignant grief.

The reigning Pontiff, Pope Celestine, and St. Cyril, the holy bishop of Alexandria, at once confronted this Nestorian heresy with great decision and zeal. There followed a long series of discussions and of efforts to undeceive and instruct, and to bring back to the truth, the blinded patriarch of Constantinople and his few followers. But as all these well-intentioned attempts proved unavailing, the Pope and the bishops resolved to condemn the bold, incipient heresy publicly in a general council.

On the 22d of December, in the year 431, the Catholic bishops met in the city of Ephesus. According to an ancient tradition, it was in this city that the Blessed Virgin passed the greater part of her life subsequent to the Ascension of Our Lord. The city also contained in very early times a church dedicated to her memory. Now the whole city resounded with rejoicings in anticipation of

the coming triumph of the Mother of God, and with songs sung in her praise.

The venerable Fathers composing the council passed the whole day in earnest discussion on this all-important question. And what part did the believing and faithful laity take in these events? All business was suspended, the stores remained closed, the inhabitants seemed to forget their cares and pleasures. From earliest morning the crowd waited patiently before the closed doors of the cathedral in which the prelates of the Church were holding their deliberations.

It was nightfall when the doors of the sacred edifice were at last thrown open. A solemn silence pervaded the multitude. A bishop stepped forth from the porch and, in a solemn and earnest voice, pronounced the sentence of condemnation on the unhappy Nestorius, on his teachings and on his adherents. A very storm of exultation and joy seemed to burst forth at once from a thousand hearts and as many throats. To the voices of the people were added the joyous sounds of all the bells in the city. Songs of thanksgiving to the Almighty God, and canticles of praise to Mary, the humble handmaid of the Lord, were heard in every street and house. In a few minutes every street in the city was brilliantly illuminated. The chief citizens of the place turned out to escort the bishops to their respective lodgings.

Early the next morning the people came in great numbers to the church of the Blessed Virgin in which, during the whole of the preceding night, hymns of praise and thanksgiving had been kept up by pious persons. Prelates, priests and people wished to unite in a grand and heart-felt thanksgiving-celebration.

Then St. Cyril, the most renowned preacher of his

time, ascended the pulpit in order to give suitable expression to the general enthusiasm of the occasion entertained towards the blessed and beloved Mother of God. His words, Christian reader, are indeed the expression of your joy and your fond enthusiasm for the Queen of heaven.

Hence I will quote at least the introduction to St. Cyril's sermon. "On your brows, dearest brethren, I see written the joy with which, out of tender devotion to the Mother of God, you have assembled in this holy place. Although the difficulties, now overcome and settled forever, have disturbed me grievously, yet the sight of so many holy and venerable prelates dispels every cloud of sadness. The time has now come when the beautiful words of the Royal Psalmist are verified in our regard. 'Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in harmony.' Praise, honor and glory be to Thee forever, O holy and adorable Trinity, who hast assembled us together in this temple sacred to the Blessed Virgin. And thou, O Mary, Mother of God, be thou forever blessed, for thou art the priceless jewel of the universe, the sacred beacon-light which is never extinguished. Thou art the crown of chastity, the sceptre of the true faith, the imperishable temple, the sacred dwelling-place of Him no space can contain. Thou art at once Mother and Virgin. In thy chaste womb thou hast encompassed the Infinite and enclosed the Unfathomable. Through thee is the Blessed Trinity adored and glorified; through thee are the heavens filled with happiness, the angels and the archangels with joy; through thee are the evil spirits dispersed, our fall repaired, and admission to heaven laid open to men; by thy mediation the blind heathen are led to the knowledge of truth, to faith and to

the grace of holy Baptism; by thy aid is the holy Gospel spread far and wide and the Church planted throughout the length and the breadth of the known world."

The whole Catholic world re-echoed again and again with the joyful news from Ephesus. When the venerable gray-haired Pope Celestine received the joyful news, he burst into tears of gratitude to God, and with the prophet Simeon in the Gospel, besought the Lord that He would now dismiss His servant in peace, for his eyes had seen the salvation which God had prepared for the world by virtue of this triumph of faith and this victory of the Mother of God.

In all Catholic hearts, throughout all ages, down to our own day, this triumphant celebration at Ephesus has met with corresponding sentiments that Mary is really the Mother of God.

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CHAPTER VI.

Christian Art in the Service of the Blessed Virgin.

It is the aim and duty of art to represent some sublime thought or idea in a correspondingly beautiful external form perceptible to the senses. The supernatural and even the divine, the natural and the human, should all be found harmoniously blending in every object of art. Now, where does the human imagination discover an object in which heavenly and earthly beauty are so charmingly united and blended as in our blessed Virgin Mother? Certainly Mary is a most fitting subject for artistic representation, and certainly Christian art cannot be accused of not having done its part faithfully to glorify her.

Do not expect, Christian reader, that a full and complete history of Christian art in the service of Mary will be here presented. For such a purpose a whole library of large volumes would not suffice. It will be all-sufficient for our present purpose if we establish the fact that a grand array of the finest artistic monuments owe their existence to man's devotion for the Blessed Virgin, that Christian art, from earliest antiquity down to our day, has contributed much to this devotion with enthusiastic fondness; and that in the hearts of the most re-

nowned artists there burned an ardent love to the Virgin Mother of God.

1. CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE.

The chief idea associated with every Catholic temple is that it is the dwelling-place of the most high God: hence the name, House of God. The truest and most striking type of a Christian church was the home of Mary in Nazareth, where dwelt the Saviour in hidden humility and in voluntary obedience to Mary and Joseph. The same also represents the position which the benign Mother of God holds in every Catholic house. She is the fond and anxious mother, the dispenser of favors, the heart of the family, the very queen in the domestic circle.

A grand cathedral, artistically built, whose tall and graceful spires seem to pierce the heavens and to disappear in the clear blue of the sky, presents to our eyes a picture of the heavenly Jerusalem. And as in the land of the blessed, all the elect throng about Mary, who is their Mother and Queen, so do her children on earth, harassed by their struggles and sufferings, take refuge beneath the sheltering mantle of their good Mother, in order to gain through her assistance the crown of victory. Hence holy faith and generous, disinterested love have, from the very beginning, erected glorious temples which they dedicated to God under her invocation and to her honor.

You have already read, dear Christian reader, on page 32 of this work, how even in the first centuries of Christianity a number of beautiful churches were erected out of love to the Blessed Virgin and in her honor. And all the churches of holy pilgrimages, which will be still further described to you, what are they but architectural

monuments raising aloft their stately towers and altars in honor of Mary? If you travel through those countries in which our holy faith still flourishes, as, for example, in France or Spain, you will encounter at almost every step churches of the Blessed Virgin, fair, costly, highly ornate, spacious, and perfect in artistic design. Then travel through those lands where heresy, aided by tyrannical rulers, has almost trodden down the seed of the ancient faith, which once shone forth in all its glory, brilliancy and vigor—as, for instance, in England, and in Protestant Germany: even there still exist in venerable beauty, graceful ruins of what were once majestic temples dedicated to the Virgin Mother. Their crumbling walls and broken arches are silent but positive witnesses of the devotion to Mary which existed in the hearts of the Catholic ancestors of the present Protestant generations. These moss-covered stones, now so silent, once resounded to solemn chant sung in Mary's honor. These crumbling niches once contained her venerated statue. Where can you find a Catholic temple that does not contain at least one altar dedicated to our blessed Lady? In Catholic countries, how many chapels you see even by the roadside, in the silent woods, on the hill-top, in the valley, all proclaiming and testifying to the traveller the devotion of the inhabitants to Mary, while they themselves give praise and honor to the blessed Mother of God.

As already hinted, all the Religious Orders were very much devoted to Mary. Hence they dedicated to her, not only themselves, but their churches and monasteries. And what glorious piles many of the religious houses were and are! Yet their handsomest ornament is the word Mary, which so many of them bear over their stately

portals. Although many of them have been desecrated and turned to venal purposes, although their consecrated walls have ceased to re-echo the praises once sung in Mary's honor, yet their very stones proclaim the devotion to Mary that burned of yore in the hearts of the pious inmates. The ruins themselves are monuments of the admirable piety that flourished in the ages of faith.

Rightfully and truthfully, therefore, may we affirm that many of the most sumptuous and graceful specimens of ancient architecture were but the expression of Catholic devotion to the Mother of the Incarnate Word.

2. SCULPTURE.

The art of the sculptor is still better adapted than even architecture to present to our view ideal beauty. It is better calculated and has more power to lend outward form and defined expression to the internal conception and inspired thought of the true artist. But while pagan sculpture in its artistic productions, presents to our senses mostly sensuous beauty and that, too, nearly always in a material and dangerous form, Christian sculpture brings before us, in the most attractive and expressive form, beauty born of heaven and sacred to heaven. Therefore, for this department in art, is the Blessed Virgin an unequalled, peerless and lovely subject. A single statue of Mary must necessarily represent and express at once dignity and humility, modesty and royal stateliness, maidenhood and motherhood. From very early times the most beautiful statues of the Mother of God were formed out of the simple wood, out of rare marble and even out of the precious metals, and the still more graceful ivory. Every incident or mystery of her varied life,

but more especially as a Mother with the divine Infant in her arms, or as the Queen of Sorrows with her dead Son reposing on her heart, has been represented in graceful and touching form by thousands of Christian sculptors. Where in all Christendom is the Catholic temple that does not contain one or several of such statues? In the city square, at the gurgling fountain, on the summit of the monument, on the house front, in the humblest home, and in the hollow of the lonely tree, in the rocky grotto, and on the steep side of the frowning precipice, during the ages of faith, a statue of the Blessed Virgin used to look down upon the passing Christian with a parent's look of anxious affection and fond encouragement.

Of a still more special and sublime significance are those figures of the Blessed Virgin which have been so highly favored by Heaven that they became known as miraculous pictures or statues. Such figures have existed from time immemorial in several sanctuaries, where they have been the means of most extraordinary cures, both of soul and body in behalf of multitudes who came before them to pray in hope and faith. These miraculous images, before which so many prayers have been heard by Heaven, afford a striking and undeniable proof that the Mother of God is pleased to make use of such material means in order to grant the blessings sought for by believing Christians. By them, in a most special and effective manner, is the trusting soul of a believing Christian vividly and forcibly reminded of the heavenly original and filled with sentiments of contrition, faith and confiding hope. The pious reader will find described in the third part of this work many of the most renowned and favored of these images which exist in many places

that have long been frequented by devout pilgrims in search of Mary's powerful aid.

We confront an unexplored mystery of God's mercy and of Mary's power when we attempt to discuss or to explain miraculous images. We may well ask ourselves, how is it that one image is favored by miracles more than another?

May it not be, perhaps, that together with the divine pleasure and decree of Heaven, the artist himself who has produced the image has contributed to make the work of his feeble hands miraculous by his strong sentiments of piety, his loving inspiration, his enthusiastic devotion, his skill in contriving a piece of art so as to arouse confidence and to awaken faith in the well-disposed spectator?

Pious legend furnishes us with the most touching traits from the lives of those devoted artists, who more for love than gain have produced such favored images. These men always endeavored first by holy meditation to form in their own souls a just conception of the original, in order afterwards to express outwardly, though in imperfect form, and in human lines and features, the idea which filled their own souls. Touching and edifying is that legend which relates how a pious and venerable artist produced the world-renowned miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin that graces the noble chapel of the monastery of Marienburg.

The chivalric Order of Knights was especially favored by Mary in its origin and protected by her during its illustrious career. It possessed, among its other sanctuaries, a grand and imposing castle-monastery, with a beautiful church, on the banks of the Rogat, not far from Danzig, in Prussia. This stronghold was the seat of the Grand

Master, or Commander-in-Chief, of the whole Order. Both castle and church being dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the place was known throughout Christendom as the seat of the Knights at Marienburg.*

This name, but especially the devotion of the brave knights to our blessed Lady, naturally required that the chief and most prominent ornament of their temple should be a fine statue of Mary.

To an artist of noble birth, and gray with years and honors, was intrusted the duty of producing such a statue. Those who knew him found it difficult to decide whether he excelled in piety or artistic skill. The Grand Master of the Order required at this artist's hands a large and handsome statue of the Madonna, which was to be worth its own weight in gold. The artist, on his side, asked no other condition than that he should be allowed as much time as he deemed necessary in order to render the work as perfect as possible, as near as possible to the conception which he held in his own mind. Even several years might be necessary.

He did not proceed at once to execute his work. For many a long day he prayed earnestly to the Blessed Virgin that she would enable him to produce a figure worthy of her dignity and sanctity. After much prayer and meditation he found, as it were, engraven on his soul an exquisite image of his patroness, which he determined to embody in marble.

Accordingly he sought far and wide for a piece of the purest and most unblemished stone that could be procured, and then, with further prayer, he set to work with hammer and chisel. At almost every stroke of his ham-

* The town which gradually grew up about the monastery is still called Marienburg.

mer he would sing and pray, saying in simple but earnest language:

Dearest Virgin! Mother mild!
Guide the chisel of thy child.

Gradually and quietly the image of Mary began to reveal itself in the lifeless block of marble. Her beauteous features came forth one by one; her soft and flowing hair appeared; her gracefully flowing garments in many a fold, and on her arm rested the divine Infant. Still the sculptor pursued his work, ever praying:

Dearest Virgin! Mother mild!
Guide the chisel of thy child.

At length, when a year or more had passed by, the abbot of the Order came to inspect the progress or the completion of the work. He was delighted and astonished at the expression of dignity and loveliness that beamed from every feature. He marvelled at the soft and graceful folds of the drapery and at the life-likeness of the Virgin's hair. In his eagerness he inquired of the artist when the statue would be ready to set up in the church. "Not for many long days yet," he replied with enthusiasm. "Oh, if I could but make it the same as the image within my heart!" So he went on working for months, and even years, each day rendering his work more and more perfect. Nor did he cease at the same time to pray:

Dearest Virgin! Mother mild!
Guide the chisel of thy child.

But at last, one day, in an ecstasy of delight, he cried out: "It is finished!" He then threw himself on his knees and greeted the original of his work with a fervent "Hail Mary."

He felt that the time had come when he was to be separated from the beloved image of his blessed Lady. It seemed as if his very heart was to be torn from his body. But his prayers to Mary became still more frequent and fervent as he knelt before the beautiful figure, which he had wrought in a two-fold sense both from the cold stone and from his own burning heart. There it stood in all its fair proportions, on the little altar of his studio, while he prayed:

Dearest Virgin! Mother mild!

It seemed to look down upon him with a smile of approbation and gratitude. At this kindly expression of assent the aged sculptor but prayed the more fervently, while his heart beat high with gladness. Then he sank slowly to the ground, his tired arms fell lifeless at his side, and his aching head rested on the altar step where stood his newly finished statue. When his friends came in the morning they found him dead. To the pious artist, first of all, had this work of his own hand become a miraculous image of Mary. For, while he worked, his gentle soul had been prepared to meet its God and to see in heaven the original, the sublime original, of his beloved statue that was henceforth to be the medium of many blessings to future generations. Pilgrims came in eager throngs to see the statue that had been brought into such life-like form by the combined aid of art and prayer. All found, by their own experience, that the Blessed Virgin had indeed heard the artist's prayer.

3. PAINTING.

In its representations painting enjoys a wider range than sculpture. By the power of color, and of light and shade, the painter's pencil succeeds in rendering its sub-

ject softer, gentler and more expressive than the stony marble, even under the chisel of the most artistic sculptor. The gentler the subject in the picture, the plainer does this attribute of painting become. Now, the tenderest and most amiable of all subjects whether as regards external beauty of form or internal purity of soul, is the Virgin Mother, especially when contemplated in her sacred relations to her divine Son, Jesus Christ. Although high and noble art has done much to honor and glorify our blessed Lady, she herself and the special lofty enthusiasm that she has awakened in the soul of the artist have contributed far more to refine and elevate art and bring it to a sublime degree of perfection. This is true more especially of painting. Through all the degrees of its beauteous development, and in all the different schools, whether Italian, Spanish, French or German, we find that the pictures of the Blessed Virgin form the first and fairest masterpieces. When we contemplate the pictures of an Angelico Fiesole, of a Michael Angelo, of a Perugino, of a Murillo, of a Holbein, of a Van Dyke and many others, we can hardly withstand a conviction that these artists must have adopted superhuman forms for their models, or else that a superhuma. agency must have guided their creative pencils. Indeed, pious legend assures us that such was the case with Brother Bartholomew della Porta, a renowned painter belonging to the Dominican Order.

Blessed Bonsilius, the first among the seven founders of the Order of the Servants of Mary, began in 1254 the erection of a monastery and a church in honor of the Blessed Virgin. In the latter was to be placed a large and handsome painting of the Annunciation. For the execution of this work an humble monk was chosen. This

was Brother Bartholomew, who, in the opinion of many of the best judges of art, was second in the art of painting only to Rafael himself. The humble but enthusiastic artist went to work, painted the complete figure of the angel, and also the figure of the Blessed Virgin, except the face. This last part of his subject he was afraid to touch, believing, in his humility, that he was unworthy and incompetent to give expression to the heavenly mildness and purity, the supernatural beauty and lovableness of the immaculate maiden of Nazareth. Time and time again he would seize his brush and as often would he lay it aside. At last he came to the conclusion that he could not finish his picture. Once again he resolved to gather his thoughts carefully together and to strive in fervent prayer and contemplation to call up before his mind a becoming model of the Virgin's countenance. While he prayed he fell into a gentle slumber. When he awoke, his wondering eyes discovered on his painting a beautiful face, every feature of which seemed to beam with life and beauty. "A miracle! A miracle!" cried out the astonished Brother Bartholomew. Attracted by his cries, Father Bonsilius and several other monks hastened to the spot. Their joy and wonder knew no bounds as they gazed at the almost divine face of the painting. One and all said: "Surely this is not the work of any human hand. Only an angel could paint such features." This same is the famous painting that is honored to this day in the beautiful Church of the Annunciation in Florence, and to visit which thousands of pious pilgrims come year after year.

Yet one more there was who understood still better than Brother Bartholomew how to paint the image of the Madonna. This was Rafael Sanzio, perhaps the most renowned of all painters.

Rafael was born on the 6th of April, 1483, at Urbino in Italy. When a boy of eight years he executed some original pictures, under the direction of his father, who was also a very good artist. When but twenty years of age he executed the beautiful painting of the Espousals of Mary and Joseph. The more famous of Rafael's subsequent pictures of the Blessed Virgin are known as the Madonna of the Veil, Madonna di Foligno, Madonna della Sedia, and the Sistine Madonna. The most exquisite of all his productions is his painting called the Sistine Madonna, which is kept in the gallery at Dresden, where it excites the wonder and admiration of thousands of daily visitors. The Blessed Virgin is represented in a cloud of glory, holding her divine Infant in her arms. The saintly Pope Sixtus and St. Barbara are seen kneeling in prayerful reverence before them.

Every painting of the Blessed Virgin and of the Holy Family executed by Rafael, carries plainly the impress of a soul inflamed with love for human nature. In his pictures of the Madonna and Child especially, the beauty of each is so noble and pure, the expression so free from every trace of earthly feeling and human passion, and the grouping so harmonious, while such heavenly inspiration is breathed forth from the canvas, that the whole seems to be the conception of an angelic mind and the production of a creative hand, and impresses us forcibly as an unapproachable and immutable ideal. On this subject Rafael himself speaks as follows to the Count of Castiglione: "When painting our blessed Lady I keep constantly before my mind a certain fixed ideal that exists in the very depths of my soul."

Rafael lived to be but thirty-seven years old. He died on Good Friday, the 6th of April, 1520, which was also

his birthday. In accordance with his own wish a statue of the Blessed Virgin, sculptured in marble, has been set up over the altar that covers his last resting-place. What more fitting memorial could adorn the tomb of the artist who, by his pious skill and holy industry, contributed so effectually to the honor of the Blessed Mother? Even in our own day the art of painting continues to promote honor and love for the handmaid of the Lord. Who has not seen and loved, for instance, the sweet and tender Madonnas executed by the artistic hand of a Deschwanden?

4. MUSIC.

How eminently fitting it is that music, the most fascinating of all the arts, should dedicate its purest and most delicate strains to the honor of Mary Immaculate. Her sublimely chaste character, firing the pure and noble heart of the truly Catholic artist, must necessarily have aroused his brain to the composition of the loftiest harmony and melody. Music stirs and sways the deepest feelings of our nature, gives expression to thoughts and sentiments which words could not express. Hence, in all ages and among all nations, music and song have been used as powerful assistants to devotion in all public worship. What subject of our holy religion is better calculated to awaken lofty aspirations in a God-loving soul deeply imbued with divine faith, or to overflow the heart with profound sentiments of joy, sympathy, hope, gratitude, and admiration and childish confidence than the infant figure of the Son of God reclining on the Maiden Mother's sacred heart, or the graceful form of that same heroic Mother standing in patient sorrow beneath the cross of her dying Son? Hence it is that those strains

of music are the grandest and the most inspiring which sing the glories of the God made man of His chosen Virgin Mother. Hardly any artist in Christian music can be found who, while consecrating his talent in that divine art to the service of the Catholic Church, has not also contributed his share to the glorification of the Blessed Virgin.

In all ages, and in all languages, our blessed Lady has been celebrated in sacred song. To-day the devout client loves to gather up and reproduce and put in lasting form those poetical and musical effusions of antiquity and the Middle Ages as so many precious, bright and sparkling gems. As it would not be possible to give, in this place, even a brief history of the music and hymns that have been dedicated to Mary, I select a few examples from the poets and composers of the German nation.

The glorious canticle of the "Magnificat," which Mary herself had sung under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was chanted in her praise and memory by the faithful in the very earliest ages of the Catholic Church. According as the different festivals were established in her honor, songs and hymns were gradually composed which were appropriate to the mystery or event commemorated. From time immemorial have there been such hymns, responsories, anthems, antiphons and even whole Masses devoted to the celebration of Mary's prerogatives and virtues. At the time when Germany was converted to Christianity, a large number of canticles in praise of the Blessed Virgin were in use throughout the Church.

St. Rotker, a Benedictine monk of St. Gall's, who died in 913, sang the glories of the ever blessed Mother of God in seven beautiful canticles which for centuries were sung devoutly in every German church and German home. These hymns were remarkable for the intense

devotion that breathed in every word and note. What pious simplicity is expressed in his hymn on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, "O Mary, born of David's royal race." How sublime and solemn his hymn on the Assumption, "With the glorious Queen of heaven angelic choirs rejoice!"

In the same age, Tutilo and other fellow-monks of Rotker composed and sang devout hymns of invocation to Mary.

The venerable Herman the Cripple, who died in 1054, and concerning whose composition of the "Salve, Regina," or "Hail, holy Queen," we shall speak farther on, composed several other hymns on Mary Immaculate. Of these the beautiful "Alma Redemptoris," like the "Salve, Regina," is to-day used in the public service of the Church.

A poem in prose, beginning with the words "All hail, bright Star of the Sea," composed by a contemporary monk of South Germany, of whom we know only his religious name, Henry, enjoyed such a lasting popularity and favor among the clergy that a writer, in quite recent times, tells us that it possessed more musical merit than "six hundred cartloads of the productions of other composers."

The German people have had hymns in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and have sung them, certainly, for the last eight hundred years. When St. Bernard preached the Crusades in the German Countries, he and his companions were much pleased and edified with the simple hymns then in use among the people. When the gallant German knights went forth to the Crusades against the enemies of the Holy Land, or when private citizens set out on pilgrimages to Jerusalem or Rome, their journeys

were always gladdened by the hearty songs and music of the meistersingers and the minnesingers who sang the praises of the Blessed Virgin. Once, when Count Henry of Rapperswyl, surnamed the Wanderer, was returning home from a pilgrimage in the Holy Land, his ship was overtaken by a dreadful storm in the Mediterranean Sea, and was threatened with speedy destruction. As he stood looking out upon the angry billows, he and his crew sang together with deep devotion, "Gentle Star of Ocean," etc. At the same time he registered a vow to Heaven that if he should escape out of the storm, he would build a monastery in gratitude to the Blessed Virgin. He fulfilled his vow. In the year 1227 he purchased from the count of Ryburg the town and surrounding country of Wettingen, Switzerland, where he founded a Cistercian abbey under the invocation of "Mary, Star of the Sea."

But music has created in honor of Mary not only popular hymns, but also lofty classical compositions that only a high musical culture can appreciate. Who can listen to the "Ave Maria" of Leonardo Leo, the "Salve, Regina," and "Stabat Mater" of John Baptiste Jesi, surnamed Pergolese, to the "Salve, Regina" of Hasse, and to the countless renderings of the glorious compositions to which the "Magnificat" has been set, without feeling himself moved to the very depths of his inmost soul and aroused to the most exalted devotion?

Furthermore many of the best and most eminent artists in music and song, besides doing honor to Mary by their beautiful compositions, have also paid to her the tribute of loving hearts, namely, a sincere practical imitation of her virtues. One of the most renowned of sacred composers was Christopher Gluck, born at Weidenwung

in Upper Palatine, July the 2d, 1714. Like many other musicians Gluck had learned the first principles of his profession in the sacred precincts of an abbey church. The pure, fresh voice of the youth, as it floated through the long aisles of the sacred edifice, his natural and easy rendering of the most difficult passages, charmed the souls of the worshippers into ecstatic devotion.

One day the youthful Christopher was leaving the church after having chanted a hymn with most wonderful effect, when he was met at the door by a venerable, gray-haired monk who said to him, "Alas! I have nothing better to offer to my youthful chorister in return for the exquisite pleasure he has afforded me by his singing, than this poor rosary. Take it, however, and keep it in remembrance of old Father Anselm. Promise me, also, to recite your prayers upon it every evening in honor of the Queen of the angelic choirs. The practice will bring you prosperity." Christopher accepted the simple but precious token and promised, with sincere and pious emotion, to say his Rosary every day.

Christopher soon after went abroad into public life. His career, though prosperous in the main, was also attended with many perils and a few disappointments. Wherever he went, in Italy, Vienna, London, or at the splendid court of Queen Marie Antoinette in Versailles and Paris, he carried with him the precious gift of old Father Anselm and never failed to keep his promise of using it. On the 15th of November, 1787, a sudden stroke of apoplexy brought his brilliant professional life to a sad and unlooked-for end. When his friends came to his room they found the cold, stiff fingers of the dead musician clutching the now worn-out rosary, the never-forgotten gift of the old friar.

Mozart, who died on the 5th of December, 1791, and Haydn, who died on the 31st of May, 1809, both grand princes in the realms of music, revered and honored the Blessed Virgin, as well by their sublimely artistic compositions as by their humble and fervent prayers, especially the prayers of the holy Rosary. This last devotion Mozart practised every day. He would often retire quietly from the most brilliant and fashionable gatherings of admiring friends in order to say his Rosary in some peaceful and remote corner of the house. On the occasion of the grand success of the presentation of his operatic symphony in Paris, Mozart gave expression to his feelings of joy and gratitude by reciting his beads.

Finally, in more modern times, and even in our own day, fair, fresh garlands of musical flowers have been woven by artistic hands and laid at the feet of the Queen of men and angels. Who has ever listened to the sweet hymns of Father Lambillotte without feeling his heart raised towards the heavenly courts where Mary reigns as Queen? How many thousands of her friends and servants love to hear, and perhaps to sing, the simple melodies of Aiblinger, and find therein hope and consolation!

5. POETRY.

Poetry has perhaps profited more by the divine gift of Christianity than any other department of the liberal arts. The hymns composed by Christian poets are veritable masterpieces. They contain flights of soul never before known to man. In their lines are to be found a ravishing and joyous appreciation of God's infinite beauty and mercy, and happy, comforting certainty of man's hope

for a future eternity hitherto dark and doubtful. More tender and sweet, if not as sublime and grave, are the tuneful numbers of the poet when he sings of the beauty, dignity and purity of Mary, of her maternal love, her maternal joys, or her maternal sorrows.

St. Ephrem the Syrian, who died in 318, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, who died in 390, and St. John Damascene, who died in 754, enriched the Church in Eastern lands with a wealth of religious canticles, in nearly all of which Mary's praises are sung in harmonious numbers. In the Church of Western Europe, Pope St. Damasus, who died in 384, St. Ambrose, who died in 397, St. Augustine, and more especially Venantius Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers, with many other poet-saints, have sung the praises of the Blessed Virgin in the sweetest and tenderest of cadences. From the twelfth to the fourteenth century the rich, broad field of devotion to Mary was fairly covered with the flowers of religious poetry. Her whole life was sung in verse by Werner von Tegernsee, a gifted poet of nature who, after wearing for many years the habit of St. Benedict, died in 1197. The wandering bards, Rumsland and Walther von der Vogelweide, from 1190 to 1230 sang Mary's praises in poems that continued to live among the people long after the death of the composers. Conrad von Wurzburg, who died about the year 1287, constructed from the gems of Mary's virtues and prerogatives a canticle of praise containing two thousand verses, called it the Golden Crown, and laid it at Our Lady's feet.

Of the productions of the fifteenth century, suffice it to mention the sweet and devotional hymn of St. Casimir, who died in 1483. To-day it is well known, and is sung

by thousands of Mary's votaries all over Christendom. It begins,

> Daily, daily, sing to Mary,
> Sing, my soul, her praises due;
> All her feasts, her actions, worship,
> With the heart's devotion true.

Although the devastating storm of the so-called Reformation in the sixteenth century shattered the delicate lyre of many a devout poet, there was no want of classical compositions in honor of the Blessed Virgin, even at that dismal time or since then.

There were the poems of Lopez de Vega, Calderon, James Balde, and, since the days of Chaucer, such gifted souls as Thomas Moore, Mrs. Browning, Longfellow, Aubrey de Vere, Father Faber, Coventry Patmore, Dante Rossetti, have sung her praises in our mother tongue. From day to day the firmament of devotion to the Blessed Virgin is illuminated by many a bright and sparkling poetic ray which, while revealing her virtues and excellence, awakens hope and confidence and new piety in the stormy heart of the troubled Christian pilgrim.

Thus, ever since the earliest dawn of Christianity, the Virgin Mother of Jesus has been celebrated in song as well as in every other department of Christian art. The boundless treasury of her graces, the inexhaustible well-spring of her virtues, and the boundless ocean of her influence in heaven, have been thus portrayed, to the souls of men, in most fascinating and attractive modes.

Happy are you, Christian reader, if, in the possession of a good conscience, you have a pledge that you will one day stand face to face with all these joys and glories in the kingdom where Mary is Queen. Thus may it be.

CHAPTER VII.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in North America.

I. NEW CONQUESTS.—NEW WEAPONS.

In America, as in every other quarter of the globe, devotion to Mary is contemporary with Christianity.

The ship in which Christopher Columbus set out in search of a new world was named St. Mary of the Conception. The naval charts by which the vessel was guided, had been drawn by Paul Toscanelli in the observatory of the grand dome of St. Mary's Church in Florence. The last portion of the Old World on which the hardy navigators looked when they bade it farewell, was the island of St. Mary's, one of the Azores group. During the voyage the "Salve, Regina" was sung every evening by all on board. We may get some idea of the thoughts and aspirations that prevailed in the manly breast of Columbus, from the peculiar anagram which, according to the custom of that time, he used when signing his official papers, and which, also, he wished to be adopted by his son Diego and all other descendants in his line. It consists of the initial letter of his office of admiral, a dignity which he esteemed as coming from God, surrounded by the initial letters of the

names of the three persons in the Holy Family: Jesus, Mary and Joseph.*

S. S. S.
A.
X. M. Y.

He named the island on which he first landed San Salvador, or Holy Saviour, in honor of the Son. The second he named Conception, in honor of the Mother. In his last will and testament he enjoined upon his son and heir to build a church in a suitable place on the island of Hispaniola. It was to be sacred to the Immaculate Conception, and to have a hospital attached that was to be conducted on the plan followed in the best institutions of the kind in Spain and Italy.

Champlain, who was the greatest and noblest among all those who followed Columbus across the ocean, and who founded the city of Quebec, gave the name and title of the Immaculate Conception to the first chapel built by himself in Canada in the year 1615.

In the year 1653 the Jesuits placed under the special patronage of the Blessed Virgin their united missions, which they had established amid untold hardships and difficulties. Their converts were so true and devoted to Mary that they were often scornfully reproached by their unconverted countrymen with having become "Maryites." In the missions among the Iroquois, where the utmost labor and vigilance were required to guard the converts, and the Fathers themselves even, the same state of things existed. In 1671 Father Rasseire wrote: "He who fancies that a whole tribe of Indians can be converted at

*In those times I or J, for Joseph, was frequently written Y. X is the Greek initial of χριστος, or Christ.

once, or that they embrace the faith by thousands, or even by hundreds, will certainly be disappointed. Canada is far from being a land of roses. To convert even one, the missionary must often travel a long distance over a path strewn with briars and thistles."

In the following year, when the celebrated Father Marquette set out to explore the course of the Mississippi river, he placed his undertaking under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Immaculate. He states in his letters that, "If the Blessed Virgin favor and assist our project of finding the mouth of this grand river, we shall name it the Conception, as well also as the first mission which we may be able to establish among the natives on its banks, as I have already done among the tribes of the Illinois." This last was at Raskasia, where to-day, after nearly a hundred and fifty years, the church bears the name of the Immaculate Conception. The two first churches at Three Rivers and at Mobile, in Alabama, were dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

Devotion to Mary was a necessary of life to the converted Huron and Iroquois Indians. They wore their rosaries either about the neck or on the arm. When they would visit the Dutch Protestant settlement at Albany for the purpose of selling skins and other wares, they wore their rosaries publicly on their necks, and indeed were much shocked at the looseness of morals to be seen among the white traders. One of the Dutch burghers having, one day, reproached an Indian woman with worshipping a creature, received the following reply, "Do you think that you can convince me that the Mother of Jesus is not deserving of respect?" By her answer the woman showed that she could distinguish where her opponent got things confused. When the converts would

return from their daily labor, they would repair to the chapel together to say their Rosary. Every Sunday they devoted the afternoon hours to the devotions of the various confraternities, especially that of the Holy Family.

Concerning Catharine Tehgahkwita, who died in the odor of sanctity, and at whose grave many miracles were wrought, it is related that she could not speak of the Blessed Virgin without being overcome with pious emotion. She knew by heart all the litanies of the Blessed Virgin and used to recite them all devoutly, especially at night after the general night prayers. She carried her rosary about her always and told over her beads several times a day. On Saturdays and the ordinary festivals of the Blessed Virgin she practised severe self-denials, and in various ways sought to imitate the virtues of the Blessed Mother. On the grander feast-days she would redouble her zeal, inventing ways and means to make new sacrifices to God and to repeat others often made before. Had it not been for this child-like, confiding devotion to the Virgin of virgins, Catharine would not have persevered for twenty years in a life of such purity and innocence, amid heathenish and ungovernable wickedness.

We have seen two different classes of heroes appear on the scene of the New World. Some came with sword and cannon; all those who wielded the sword have long since perished by the sword, and their conquests have melted away. Others came with the cross and the rosary; of these many met a martyr's death, and others died of hunger and exposure in the wilderness. Yet this did not deter others from following in their footsteps and sacrificing themselves for the same holy cause. Their time of greatest peril was during the time that the Prot-

estant colonies were at war with the savages, while the missionaries were warring against paganism. They were driven out of Virginia and the Carolinas. The mission on St. Mary's Bay was destroyed. When the intrepid Fathers could not return, they went to plant the faith amid other difficulties and dangers.

When the shepherds were driven off, Mary would take care of the destitute flocks. Thus, for example, the Indian chief of the Peorias carried about his neck a crucifix and a medal of the Blessed Virgin. He had heard that Mary is the "help of Christians." One day an Indian belonging to the hostile tribe of the Foxes lay in ambush for this pious man, and had already levelled his gun to fire. The other had his musket with him, but it was unloaded. In this moment of danger he called upon Mary for help. The gun of his enemy missed fire five times. The good Indian now overpowered his assailant with bodily strength, took him prisoner, led him in triumph to his tribe, to whom he explained who it was that stood by him in his hour of danger and delivered his enemy into his hands. Hence the captive was not subjected to the cruelty usually practised upon prisoners.

But it is one who plants, and another who gives the increase. The prevailing race of white people was to come from Great Britain. Beside her Protestant colonists, England sent also a band of Catholic settlers, who came to their wild, new home under the guardianship of the Blessed Virgin. Two vessels, the Ark and the Dove, brought them over. Who is not reminded by these names of the Ark of the Covenant, and of the chosen one of God, whom the heavenly Bridegroom called His dove? The Catholic pilgrims set sail, under the guidance of the

"Star of the Sea," on the 22d of November, 1633. The gracious Mother of God bade them welcome to their new homes. It was on the festival of the Annunciation, which in England is better known as "Lady Day in Spring," that the Maryland Fathers landed on St. Clement's, now called Blackstone, Island, in the Chesapeake Bay. Father White celebrated Mass, and then the standard of man's salvation was raised aloft to proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel, and as a sign that the land was taken possession of in the name of the King of kings and of His blessed Mother. They named their settlement St. Mary's, and that land of refuge was afterwards persecuted Maryland.

2. MARY'S MISSIONARIES.

Again it was a "Lady Day," on which the first bishop of the United States, Dr. John Carroll, received episcopal consecration. On "Lady Day in Harvest," in the year 1790, the ceremony was performed by Right Rev. Dr. Charles Walmsley, vicar apostolic of London, and bishop of Rama *in partibus infidelium.* The scene of the consecration of the first chief pastor of the incipient American Church, which had just been set free by the war of Independence, was the sumptuous chapel of Lalworth Castle in England. The preacher, on the occasion, was the celebrated Jesuit, Father Plowden.

It was on the 7th of December, the eve of the festival of the Immaculate Conception, in that same year, that the newly consecrated prelate arrived in Baltimore, his future episcopal city. In his inaugural sermon to his assembled people, he urged devotion to the Blessed Virgin, as the best means for bishop and people to lessen present evils, to meet future difficulties, to establish relig-

ious life on a secure and permanent foundation, and thus to enable them to fulfil all their duties.

Eleven months later Bishop Carroll assembled his twenty-two priests in the first diocesan synod. The decrees of this meeting have been confirmed and renewed by all subsequent ecclesiastical councils, and have made the groundwork of the complete discipline of the Church in the United States. Of the statutes adopted at that synod, the nineteenth reads as follows: "From the beginning of our episcopate we were most desirous of choosing the Blessed Virgin Mary as the principal patroness of our diocese, that, through her intercession, faith, piety towards God, and purity of morals might flourish and be more and more augmented among the faithful committed to our care. Having been consecrated the first bishop of Baltimore on the feast of the Assumption of the same Blessed Virgin Mary, led by a most ardent devotion to honor so great a patroness, we, in the first place, exhort our venerable brethren themselves to venerate the most Blessed Virgin with the tenderest devotion, and to recommend the same devotion frequently and earnestly to the faithful committed to their care, that all may feel that they have in her patronage a powerful protection. We further decree that the Sunday within the octave of the Assumption, or the feast itself, if it fall on a Sunday, shall be celebrated as the principal feast of our diocese, upon which day the faithful are to be earnestly recommended to receive devoutly the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. And for the increase of the piety of the faithful we shall humbly petition the Holy See to grant them the choicest spiritual favors."

In this same sentiment and spirit Archbishop Carroll wrote and preached for five-and-twenty years. It has

pleased Providence to so guide his co-laborers and successors that one and all of them worked and strengthened in the same spirit. Among these we mention in the first place, the originator of the American Provincial Council, Dr. John England, first bishop of Charleston. This prelate, so famous for his extraordinary learning and eloquence, as displayed in his writings and sermons, as well as for his piety and pastoral activity, had been early dedicated to Mary by his mother in Ireland. When he was but a student in Carlow College he made a promise to devote his life, under the protection of the Queen of heaven, to the foreign missions. After having devoted two-and-twenty years to the fulfilment of this promise, founding the Church in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, erecting several religious houses, and saving innumerable souls, he said to the priests who knelt about his death-bed, on the 10th of April, 1842, "I recommend my poor diocese to your patron saints, and above all to her to whom our divine Lord entrusted His children, in the person of the beloved disciple, when He said, 'Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother.'"

In the life of the first bishop of Cincinnati, Right Rev. Edward Fenwick, we find the same trait of character. He used to attribute his very existence to the prayers of the Blessed Virgin. During his sojourn at Bornheim in Flanders, where he was educated and became an ornament of the Dominican monastery, he was taken prisoner and condemned to death by the soldiers of the French revolutionary army. He had recourse to his virginal patroness, and became indebted to her for his liberation.

The same love for Mary was ever manifested in the life of Right Rev. Benedict Joseph Fenwick, the first bishop of Boston. It was his custom to perform every

day appointed acts of devotion to the Blessed Virgin. When so completely broken down by sickness, after a long, laborious and meritorious life, that he could not himself go through these pious exercises, he deputed others to perform them for him. On the day of his death, the person whom he had enjoined to say the three "Hail, Marys" which he had imposed upon himself the obligation of saying every day, in reparation for the indignities cast upon the honor of the Blessed Virgin by unbelievers, happened to omit them. The dying bishop, who to the attendants seemed unconscious of everything around him, noticed the omission and requested to have the three "Hail, Marys" recited.

The Right Rev. John Dubois, founder and first president of that training-school of bishops, Mount St. Mary's at Emmittsburg, and afterwards bishop of New York, attributed all his prosperity in life to the Blessed Virgin.

One of his pupils thus writes of him, "Having it at heart, above all things else, to implant and foster piety in the hearts of the young, he strove chiefly to impart his own tender love and devotion for the Mother of God, to the souls entrusted to his care. To her he dedicated his church, his seminary, his college, the woods, the spring, the very mountain itself. Everything about him was sacred to Mary. To her honor were his life and labors devoted. He taught us in the most impressive manner, both by word and example, to honor the sublime virtues and prerogatives of our blessed Lady, to love that purest and tenderest of mothers, and to have confidence in the powerful intercession of so faithful an advocate. O, Mary! Immaculate Queen of heaven, gracious patroness of our beloved mountain, may we never cease to reduce these salutary lessons to a devout practice."

An equally zealous reverer of Mary was Right Rev. Simon Gabriel Bruté, first bishop of Vincennes. It was his custom during his long and laborious missions to recite every day the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin. During his last hours of life, devotion to her was the subject that occupied his expiring brain and heart.

Similar traits of love and devotion for Mary might be adduced from the lives of all the bishops and priests of our country. It was certainly the expression of popular sentiment, that the Sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore, on the 10th of May, 1846, resolved unanimously and heartily to request the Holy See to give its gracious approval to the action of the Council choosing the Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, as the patroness of the United States, and also to grant permission to celebrate in this country, for the sake of the Catholic laity, the festival on the Sunday following the 8th of December, and to allow the title, "Immaculate Conception," to be inserted in the prayer and preface of the Mass and in the litany of Loretto.

When, a few years later, the question of defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was pending, the American bishops exhibited a special desire to see this crown of glory placed on the brow of Mary. All of them who could possibly do so, were present in Rome at the solemn definition of the mystery, on the 8th of December, 1854.

At the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, a decree was passed to make the festival of the Immaculate Conception a holy day of obligation. We need not wonder at this decree, for the council was solemnly opened on the feast of the holy Rosary, 1866. Each session was begun with a "Hail, Mary," and was closed with the

prayer, "We fly to thy patronage," etc. The seal of the president, the most reverend archbishop of Baltimore, bore the image of the Madonna with the legend, "Auspice, Maria," that is to say, "Under the auspices of Mary."

3. MARY'S SANCTUARIES.

It needs no proof to show that the Catholic laity of the United States are in unison with their beloved hierarchy in devotion to Mary. The long list of churches dedicated to God under her invocation, is proof abundant. According to the Catholic Directory of 1896, there are no less than 1024, under the following titles: St. Mary's, 387; Immaculate Conception, 234; Assumption B. V. M., 79; Annunciation B. V. M., 29; Holy Rosary, 42; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 26; St. Mary, Star of the Sea, 19; Our Lady of Lourdes, 17; Nativity B. V. M., 16; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 15; Our Lady of Sorrows, 19; Notre Dame des Victoires, 11; Notre Dame, 11; Our Lady of Seven Dolors, 10; Visitation B. V. M., 10; Our Lady of the Angels, 9; Our Lady, Help of Christians, 9; Our Lady of Good Counsel, 7; Our Lady of Guadalupe, 6; Our Lady of Mercy, 5; St. Mary, Mother of God, 5; St. Mary of the Lake, 4; Immaculate Heart of Mary, 4; Our Lady of the Lake, 3; Sacred Heart of Mary, 3; Holy Name of Mary, 3; St. Mary's of the Visitation, 3; Our Lady of Refuge, 3; Holy Mary of the Snow, 2; St. Mary's of Perpetual Help, 2; Our Lady of Good Hope, 2; Our Lady's, 2; Purification B. V. M., 2; Our Lady of Loretto, 2; Presentation B. V. M., 2; Our Lady of Grace, 2; Our Lady of the Valley, 2; Our Lady of Cyentochowa, 1; Mother of Divine Grace, 1; Blessed Virgin, 1; Our Lady of the Presentation, 1; Our Lady of Consolation, 1; St. Mary's

of the River, 1 ; Ave Maria, 1 ; Humility of Mary, 1 ; Holy Maternity B. V. M., 1 ; St. Mary's of the Scapular, 1 ; St. Mary's of the Mount, 1 ; Our Lady of the Isles, 1 ; St. Mary's of the Quapaws, 1 ; Our Lady of the Springs, 1 ; Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, 1 ; Our Lady of the Gulf, 1 ; Our Lady, Queen of Heaven, 1 ; and Church of the Madonna, 1.

Whatever may be the names of Catholic churches we find that every one of them contains an altar of the Blessed Virgin, or, at least, some memorial shrine, if only a statue or even a picture. In the greater number of these churches, the high altar displays the grouping of the Crucifixion, the altar on the gospel side shows the image of Mary, and that on the epistle side the figure of St. Joseph. It is moreover a general custom in some dioceses, prescribed by express law, to commence the Sunday morning services with the Rosary and litany of the Blessed Virgin. In every congregation her festivals are solemnized with special joy and numerous reception of the sacraments. The May devotions, and all others of a similar character, are observed by young and old. The sodalities are usually placed affectionately under her guardianship. The Confraternities of the Rosary and Scapular are everywhere established. Sodalities are a matter of course in all our colleges and seminaries and are to be found in many other communities. The priest may feel assured that he will obtain from the faithful, generous people in his care, all he asks for the honor and in the name of Mary. It is owing to that same name, therefore, that so many schools, colleges, orphan asylums, hospitals and convents enjoy not only the protection of the Blessed Virgin, but also the favor and support of the Catholic laity.

More especially do the religious communities, the Orders and Congregations, rival each other in love and reverence for the blessed Mother. All the regular houses, no matter whence they derive their origin, what name they bear, what object they aim at, are nurseries and homes of devotion to Mary. All members of whatsoever Order consider themselves, above all things else as children of that ever Blessed Virgin to whom they are indebted for the grace of their vocation and of perseverance in it.

4. DEVOTION TO MARY IN CANADA.

What has been said here in general terms of the United States, may also be said and asserted with truth of Canada, or the British American possessions. Canada was always a truly Catholic land, having inherited from the eldest daughter of the Church, from whom she is descended, all the treasures of Catholic tradition, a deposit which she has carefully guarded and preserved amid trials and persecutions to the present day. As we shall say in some of the subsequent chapters, Divine Providence has shown itself more visibly here in directing the colonization of these people and in guiding their religious destinies, than anywhere else. Hence devotion to Our Lady is as necessary an element of religious life to the clergy and laity of Canada as it is to France, their motherland. Champlain, the Moses of these exiles, was a child of Mary and the builder of her first sanctuary in New France.

When the Franciscan missionaries dedicated their monastery in Quebec, on the 25th of May, 1621, they gave to it the same name that their saintly founder loved so tenderly in his convent. They named it "Our Lady of the Angels."

Francis de Laval de Montmorency, first bishop of Quebec, wore on his coat of arms the image of Mary Immaculate, side by side with St. Louis, king of France. Nowhere has Mary had more dutiful sons than the Jesuit missionaries in Canada such as the illustrious martyrs Brebeuf, Jogues, Bressani, Chaumonot, Lallemant, and their companions. Nowhere else has any Congregation of men so perfectly maintained the spirit of their founder, as have the Sulpicians of Canada that of their venerable Olier, who to such a degree looked upon his own house as a place sacred to Mary, that he had her name written on the furniture! And if most of the Indian tribes whom these missionaries converted have become extinct, yet many of them, thousands of them, are to-day in heaven with that Mother whom these holy men taught them to love. Canada, though now for more than a century in the hands of an heretical power, has not lost its faith, its ancient blessings, its institutions, or its monuments.

5. DEVOTION TO MARY IN MEXICO.

To the south of the United States we see the colonies of Spain, a nation that was second to none other in love for Mary. Spain did not exterminate the natives upon whose lands she planted her colonies. She converted and civilized them. Though the great work is as yet incomplete, it is well deserving of grateful and generous recognition. The honor belongs mainly to the sons of St. Francis and of St. Dominic, for through their heroic efforts Mexico, as well as Central America and South America, was rescued from paganism and won over as a spiritual conquest to the faith.

On the 1st of September, 1513, the valiant Spaniard, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, with 190 men and 600 Indian

carriers, set out from the colonial station of Antigua for the purpose of discovering a new ocean which, the natives said, was not far distant to the westward. A banner inscribed with an image of the Blessed Virgin was borne at the head of the advancing column. Thus were the greatest difficulties and hardships easily overcome. On the 25th of September Balboa saw, from an eminence on which he stood, the Pacific Ocean extending away into unknown distance, full of grandeur and majesty. Throwing himself on his knees he thanked God and the Queen for that discovery and the magnificent prospect. But a few days more of travel and the goal would be reached. On reaching the coast the hardy explorers sang a hymn of thanksgiving to "Mary, Star of the Sea." Balboa, with a standard of Mary in one hand and a sword in the other, plunged up to his waist in the waters of the Pacific and took solemn possession of the ocean, which he named the South Sea.

Five years later Ferdinand Cortez received from Velasquez, at that time governor of Cuba, a commission to conquer the empire of Mexico for the Spanish crown. Cortez, accompanied by several missionaries, landed on the 4th of March, 1519, on the Mexican coast and stormed and took the city of Tabasco, and gave it the name of Our Lady of Victory. He persuaded his soldiers to burn their ships, that retreat might be made hopeless and that their courage during the conquest might be the greater. Under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin the expedition, so prosperously begun, was continued, and wherever a heathen temple was found it was transformed into a Christian church; the idols were destroyed and the crucifix, or an image of Mary replaced them.

Thus it was that in olden time St. Dominic himself

made use of the Rosary, and of devotion to Mary, to open the eyes and soften the hearts of the heretics and to bring down the blessings of Heaven on his missionary labors. So in this case did his zealous sons rival the sons of St. Francis in their efforts to diffuse that devotion more widely and to render it more firm and lasting. Without these measures Mexico would never have become a Catholic land and a Protestant emissary would not have been able to observe the good works of a Zumarraga, a Las Casas, a Martin of Valencia, a Motolinia and a Betanzos. He would not have been able to say of the achievements of those Spanish Religious of the sixteenth century, what Mr. W. Kirby, a missionary of the English High Church wrote in terms of lamentation, from Mackenzie, in the year 1862, concerning the labors of the Oblate Fathers among the Copperhead and Esquimaux Indians: "We must acknowledge that these priests possess to a high degree the confidence and the love of the Indians, and are devoted heart and soul to their work. But, sad to say, their zeal drowns all regard for truth and they make use of all manner of means to attain their ends. Little else is heard or seen except devotion to Mary."

Indeed, John Zumarraga, the first bishop of Mexico in a letter addressed in June, 1531, to the Chapter of his Order in Toulouse, writes, "We are laboring constantly for the conversion of the Indians, and the grace of God grants very favorable results to our efforts. The Franciscan Fathers have already baptized a million of pagans. Five hundred heathen temples have already been destroyed and more than twenty thousand idols have been burned. And what is still more wonderful is the fact that in this city, where formerly the hearts of twenty

thousand children of both sexes were offered every year in horrible sacrifice to the devil, the Religious have so far succeeded in abolishing these awful rites that all men's hearts are turned towards the one true God and know no other sacrifice than prayer, praise and the pure sacrifice of the atonement.

"The children of the best families we have gathered into our seminary. There, to the number of five hundred or more, they learn to read, write, sing, and to assist at divine service. These innocent children are very devout at prayer, go often to confession, receive Holy Communion with great fervor, and impart to their parents the instructions they have received from us. At midnight they leave their beds to recite alternately the office of the Blessed Virgin, a devotion of which they are remarkably fond. The same thing may be said of the Religious Order of Females, who have more than a thousand girls under their direction."

The Rosary was the text-book of the converts. In it they found a constant reminder of the principal mysteries and doctrines of Christianity.

The lives of the missionaries were not without evidences that Mary did not let their efforts go unrewarded and their prayers unheard. For themselves and their spiritual children they found in Mary success in their labors, protection in danger, and freedom from evils of soul and body. An example of this was that wonderful Dominic Mary of the Annunciation, who more than once, when unable to overtake alive the sick persons to whom he had been called to administer the sacraments of the dying, awoke them from death to life by calling on the aid of the Blessed Virgin.

Under Mary's protection and in her name they built

their churches, monasteries, schools and hospitals. Many of the churches have since become famous pilgrim resorts and to-day are frequented by throngs of devout servants of Mary. Thus arose in very early times in those countries, Our Beloved Lady of Guadalupe, the Loretto of the New World, where the Blessed Virgin, on the 12th of December, 1531, appeared to an Indian, and again twice afterwards, and enjoined upon him the establishment of that shrine as a place of comfort and consolation for his people. Then there is Our Lady of Remedy, at Montezuma, where one of Cortez's soldiers built a chapel for an image of Mary before which he had prayed in a thousand dangers; and again Our Lady of the Lagos, in the mountains of Zacatecas, where even yet every year, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the greatest and largest gathering of the people takes place.

PART II.

The Blessed Virgin Honored in Church Festivals.

CHAPTER I.

The Festivals of the Church.

I. THE SABBATH DAY.

Almighty God Himself has ordained by word and example that one day in every week should be exclusively consecrated to Himself: by example, when He rested after the sublime and miraculous creation of the world and blessed the seventh day; by word, when He gave to the chosen people the divine commandment, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labor and shalt do all thy works, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God. Thou shalt do no work on it, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are in them and rested on the seventh day, there-

fore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (Exodus xx. 8–11).

You are fully aware, Christian reader, that observance of this day so sacred to the Lord, was changed from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week. This change took its rise from the pious desire on the part of the Church and of the faithful to dedicate to God the first part of the week rather than the last part, and moreover the day of rest should be the memorial day of the glorious Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which took place on Sunday. Christian reader, examine yourself here earnestly and sincerely in order to discover whether to the best of your power you have complied with and discharged this duty of sanctifying the day of the Lord, by piously hearing Mass and the word of God and by other spiritual work, as well as by refraining from servile work and from all forbidden amusements and pleasures. Are you solicitous, also, that those who depend upon you observe with equal exactness the Lord's day? You would indeed give but little joy to your dear Mother Mary if you pretended to observe her festivals, yet offended her divine Son, the Almighty God, on His day.

2. CATHOLIC FESTIVALS.

Sunday, however, was not sufficient to satisfy the zeal of the Church or the piety of the faithful. Even in the days of the apostles there were festival days and festival seasons on which, although they were of Jewish origin, important events in the great work of redemption had taken place. And why should not those days be sanctified? Should not the events and the truths which had such an important bearing on all mankind for all time—rich, too,

as they were in blessings such as the Birth, Passion and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ—should not they live in the grateful memories of the redeemed and be forever glorified by a suitable festival day?

But it is not alone the sacrifices in the life of our blessed Redeemer that deserve our admiration and imitation. Similar sacrifices have been practised to a wonderful degree by weak men. Should not such examples of grace and of love for God be held up to men for their imitation? Should they not be utilized in order to strengthen those who are struggling in the battle of life? To encourage and stimulate those who are weary and despondent? To lead men to glorify God and to save their souls as these models have done?

There exists a sacred and intimate bond of union between all those souls which are united in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. This doctrine of the Catholic Church is called the communion of saints. Christian reader, what comforting prospect this truth opens up before the ravished eyes of your soul! You are not alone or unaided in your spiritual life. You belong not only to the holy Catholic Church with its wealth of grace and truth, you are moreover a companion of God and a member of His household. You are a member of that one great community which is diffused not only throughout all lands on this earth, but also through the kingdom of the Church suffering in purgatory, and the Church triumphant in heaven. The rich merits of the saints constitute a common property among all the children of God. And you, too, Christian reader, have a share therein. Nay, more, not only the merits of the saints are ours, but we enjoy intercession and protection. Is it not, therefore proper and useful to honor in Christ, the Lord, these our

perfected brethren and sisters in Christ, the Lord, in order more certainly to become sharers in their merits, protection and intercession, and to rouse ourselves?

And now, Christian reader, what place does the ever Blessed Virgin Mother of God occupy in this communion of saints? And what corresponding place should she occupy in the calendar of the Church festivals?

CHAPTER II.

The Festivals of the Blessed Virgin in the Catholic Church.

I. THE CONSTELLATION OF FESTIVALS.

In majestic but mild and gentle beauty the moon sails in the firmament: what this fair luminary is to our eyes, in the starry world, such is the Queen of heaven in the firmament of the Catholic Church. Although, like the moon, she does not shine by her own light, or diffuse her own warmth, or display her own mild beauty, she is, nevertheless, a safe guiding light along the dark and dangerous paths of our earthly pilgrimage, for she, too, has come forth from the hand of an Almighty and All-Wise Creator. In this manner does this humble handmaid of the Lord preside over the very heart and soul of our holy Church. She is the bright and beautiful reflection of the divine Son of justice. She is the willing and obedient co-operatrix in the regeneration and redemption of mankind, the seat and dispenser of divine grace.

This high position, these high prerogatives and the universal and trusting veneration of the entire believing world, obtain expression in the copious and abundant garland of festivals and seasons which, in the course of the year, adorns ecclesiastical life in beautiful and

significant succession. How sublimely inventive was that sentiment of faith and of simple love which prompted the Church and the Catholic people generally to establish such feasts! Not only the prominent and important events of her life gave occasion and supplied the subjects for such festivals, but also seemingly insignificant circumstances, yes, even miraculous occurrences, extraordinary favors which the Church itself, or some part thereof, enjoyed in the course of her long career, and were obtained through Mary's intercession, gave rise to many such festivals. Finally, different countries, different Religious Orders, different confraternities, various favored places have their special festivals of the Mother of God.

2. MARY'S FEASTS ADVANCE THE GLORY OF GOD.

But do not so many days of festival and commemoration of Mary become a superstition? Do they not detract from the glory of God? Mary herself has said in the "Magnificat," when speaking of the dignity of the Mother of God, "The Lord, who is mighty hath done great things in me." Since, therefore, God has been pleased to do great things in His creature, on that very account we solemnize the fact and thus give all the glory for His doings to His creature. For the same reason all the glory of the celebration of the feast is reflected back to God, and thus we may term a Lady Day also the Lord's Day. As Christ, the Lord, during His earthly career gathered about Him all who were burdened and heavily laden in order to comfort them, so in all time does He assemble, on these feasts, around His altars and His priests the faithful who are in spiritual need, in order to instruct the ignorant, to grant pardon to the

penitent, to give courage to the despondent and to give grace and life to all.

Moreover, how and in what manner are the feasts of Mary solemnized? On every feast of the Blessed Virgin, which is of obligation, every true Christian refrains strictly from servile work, assists at holy Mass and the preaching of the word of God, and performs other acts of devotion. Again, a zealous client of Mary will piously choose these days to reconcile himself to God by a worthy reception of the sacraments, will fortify his soul with the Bread of angels and also endeavor to gain indulgences for himself or for the suffering souls in purgatory. Now these are all salutary practices which the festivals of Mary have in common with Sunday and other festivals of the Lord; they are practices which tend to the glory of God and the sanctification of the soul. Yes, we may affirm that such festivals are bulwarks to the sanctification of the Sundays, for as the true clients of Mary are also the most conscientious Christians, they will sanctify in a special manner the days appointed by God to be kept holy. This they will do not only because it is their duty so to act as Christians, but also because they know and believe that by so doing they prepare for their good Mother as great a happiness as if they performed special devotions in her individual honor. Moreover the regular weekly recurrence of Sunday affords them a pleasant opportunity to honor the ever Blessed Virgin. Finally the godless materialistic tendency of the times attacks first the festivals and then the Sundays. As long, therefore, as these festivals are conscientiously observed the Sundays will be respected. Even in our own days we cannot shut our eyes to the sad truth that as the holy days fall away or are suppressed, the sanctification

of the Lord's day is sadly diminished or is disappearing altogether.

But, Christian reader, it is not the question how many and how beautiful are the feasts of the Blessed Virgin and how piously you observe them. Everything depends on your keeping them according to the wishes of your glorious Queen, and in the spirit of the holy Catholic Church.

CHAPTER III.

How We Should Keep the Festivals of the Blessed Virgin.

With what dispositions, Christian reader, should you observe the name feast of your beloved Mother? In the first place, you must love the feast and rejoice in it and prepare yourself for it in order to surprise your beloved Mother by a small but suitable offering. Secondly, you should pass the day in grateful remembrance of her maternal love. Finally, you should close the day by making a holy resolution and promise to be more faithful in the future in discharging towards her your filial duties. In some such manner you should celebrate every festival of your glorious Mother.

I. PREPARATION.

In order to at least prepare themselves for the better observance of the festivals of the Mother of God, in order to observe them more strictly, and thus to secure richer and more abundant graces, the children of Mary, from time immemorial, practised a very suitable and edifying devotion, called a novena, or nine days' devotion. This devotion consists in sanctifying in a special manner, by prayer and other pious works, the nine days which precede any feast of the Blessed Virgin. The number of

these days is fixed at the figure nine, in order to imitate the example of the Blessed Virgin herself and of the apostles, who shut themselves, during nine days of retreat, in an upper room in Jerusalem in order to prepare themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost.

For the five principal festivals of the Blessed Virgin there are many suitable novenas authorized by the Church authorities, which are in general use. To every pious Christian, who, alone or in union with others, whether in the church or in a private dwelling, performs any one of these novenas on a festival of the Blessed Virgin, Pope Pius VII. has granted an indulgence of three hundred days. To all those who perform these exercises on each of the nine days and then receive the sacraments on the festival, or on any day within the octave, and pray according to the intention of the Holy Father, he grants a plenary indulgence, which indulgence may also be applied to the poor suffering souls in purgatory. In times of great perplexity, and in great calamities, these devotions have very often brought great relief. Do not, especially when you stand in need of some special grace, omit to merit such grace by performing one of these novenas. Whenever, and in whatever form, you perform these devotions, observe the following points, which you will find useful to yourself and pleasing to the beloved Mother of God:

1. On each morning of the nine days offer up, through an act of pure intention and through the sacred and immaculate heart of Mary, your prayers and other good works of the day.

2. If possible, during the novena, assist every day at holy Mass, there and then to lay your petitions before the divine Son.

3. During these days watch carefully over your thoughts, words and works, in order that no stain of sin may taint them.

4. Fulfil with the closest precision and utmost care all the duties of your state of life; also during the day perform some work of mercy, practise some mortification of the senses, some internal act of self-denial, some act of patience.

5. Often, when at work, raise your heart to Mary, and in sighs make known to her your wants. The purer your heart is, and the greater your confidence, the sooner may you look for an answer to your petition and for the result of your devotion.

6. If your daily avocations, or the state of your health, will not permit you to fast till midday on the eve of the festival, at least abstain from some delicacy in eating and drinking.

7. On the festival day itself you should receive, after due preparation and with much devotion, the Holy Sacrament of the altar. Then you should once again dedicate yourself to your blessed Mother.

Unprecedented conversions and many other blessings are the frequent result of these novenas, or nine days of devotion to the Blessed Virgin. How pleasing to her these devotions are may be inferred from a vision granted to St. Gertrude. She saw one day a great number of souls gathered together and nestling with an appearance of unhesitating confidence under the mantle of the Blessed Virgin, who seemed to look down upon them with motherly tenderness. Then the saint seemed to hear a voice, which said: "These are those souls, who in past times used to prepare themselves for a proper celebration of the feast of the Assumption."

2. ON THE FESTIVAL DAY.

To you, Christian reader, as a child of Mary, every feast of the Blessed Virgin should be in every sense a day of the Mother of God, that is to say, a day consecrated entirely to the Mother of God. In the morning awake with a joyful heart and meditate on the mystery commemorated on the day. Then utter thanks to God for having spared you to see this feast of your blessed Mother. Awake in your soul sentiments of love for the mystery of the day and rejoice at the honor and the glory which are to-day rendered to the blessed Mother throughout the Catholic world. Unite yourself to this spirit and present these lofty sentiments to the Queen of heaven as a festal gift at her feet.

When the day is a holy day of obligation, you will of course keep it strictly by refraining from unnecessary servile work and by hearing holy Mass; but you can gain the greatest of grace by going to confession and holy communion.

If, dear reader, you are a Christian young woman, and the custom prevails in your parish church that young girls in special uniforms, with wreaths and white dresses, carry out processions in honor of the Blessed Virgin, be sure not to lose the merit of these pious exercises. No petty vanity should be your motive for taking part in these processions. You should be actuated by a conscientious and justifiable pride in thus publicly acknowledging yourself to be a child of Mary. You should always cherish in your heart a firm determination to make yourself ever more and more worthy of this uniform and of this honorable society by a conscientious imitation of the Virgin Queen in her purity of heart.

Perhaps in the afternoon you may have an opportunity to visit some neighboring place of pilgrimage, or some favorite altar of the Blessed Virgin. Such little excursions, when made in a spirit of piety, are invigorating to body and soul. Or you may occupy yourself in reading a book which treats of the life, virtues and imitation of the Blessed Virgin.

3. THE FRUIT.

Every feast of the Blessed Virgin, dear Christian reader, should bring you forward at least one step on the way of perfection by imitating her virtues. Therefore, you should make it your business on these days to contemplate and study carefully that virtue which is most conspicuous in the mystery of the feast, and apply it to yourself, as far as your circumstances in life will permit—then to make your resolutions as to when and where and how you may practise these virtues. These good resolutions for the future should be accompanied by an earnest retrospect of the past. How have you kept the resolutions which you made on the last festival of the Blessed Virgin? Where do you place the cause of your neglect and forgetfulness? What are the hindrances, dangers and other obstacles to your earnest and successful imitation of Jesus Christ and of His glorious Mother, Mary?

Christian reader, examine yourself seriously and ask with what zeal and with what profit you have hitherto solemnized the festivals of the Blessed Virgin. In childlike humility ask her pardon for all your unfaithfulness; and resolve for the future to do all in your power to make these days true days of grace for yourself and of honor and motherly joy for the Blessed Virgin. And you, Christian fathers and mothers, promise that these days

shall be properly solemnized by those subject to you, the same as Sunday and holy days, and to suffer nothing in your house that would be against the sacredness of the day, your conscience, the salvation of the souls entrusted to your care, or the most pure heart of Mary.

CHAPTER IV.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

NEVER since the beginning of the world was our blighted earth the witness of so joyful an event as on the day when St. Ann became the mother of that holy child who, according to the divine promise, was to crush the serpent's head. For a new sun dawned upon the earth and its genial rays were soon to bring new blessings and produce new fruit. In this spirit of joy, and of hope in a new life in store for fallen man, was this feast of the conception of Mary solemnized during the first ages by our holy Mother, the Church.

But soon there came a new and festive joy. From the writings of the ancient Fathers of the Church it is not clearly established whether in the early ages of Christianity the belief, that Mary was conceived without original sin, prevailed generally among the faithful people. As soon, however, as this wonderful distinction of Mary, at least as a pious opinion, became known to the people, the feast of the conception became the feast of the Immaculate Conception and was so solemnized. Ever since the 8th of December, 1854, when the universally received opinion of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was solemnly proclaimed an article of divine faith in the Catholic Church,

every Catholic Christian has celebrated the festival with holy joy on account of the undeniable and never stained angelic purity of our beloved Mother. You too, Christian reader, should solemnize this festival with similar sentiments every year on the eighth day of the Christmas month.

We may well be astonished that this festival of Mary was celebrated at so early a date in the history of Christianity. Georgius, bishop of Nicomedia, who lived in the beginning of the seventh century, tells us that the festival of the conception of the Mother of God was even then of ancient tradition and not of recent institution. The Emperor Emmanuel Comnenus, seeing how time-honored this festival was and how cherished among the people, ordained by law, about the year 1150, that this festival should take its place among those which were solemnly kept by all the subjects of his kingdom. This law reads thus, "The eighth day of the Christmas month is a festival day, for on this day is commemorated the conception of the Mother of God."

Although this festival was not generally celebrated in the West as early as it was in the East, it was known and recognized there not much later, especially in some localities. Thus we find that Ildephonsus, archbishop of Toledo, introduced the observance of this feast into his diocese as early as the year 667. Naples, which, owing to its situation on the coast and its extensive commerce with the East, had better opportunities of becoming familiar with the usages of the Eastern lands, observed this festival as early as the ninth century. It appears to have been introduced into England as early as the tenth century. From England its observance was carried over into Normandy where the pomp attending it was so mag-

nificent that it was called the "Feast of the Normans." In France there has existed since the year 1486 a confraternity known as "To the Immaculate Virgin," although it afterwards became a literary society. Every year the members of this society elected a president whose business it became to award valuable prizes to all the poets who in hymns, odes, canticles, and other strains, sang in the most becoming manner the praises of the Blessed Virgin. Peter Corneille, one of the most renowned tragic poets of France, won the first prize for a poem which he composed in honor of the mystery of this feast, and which was read at the "Feast of the Normans" in the year 1663.

Pope Sixtus IV., by a bull dated the 1st of March, 1476, exhorted all the faithful to observe with unusual piety and devotion the festival of the Immaculate Conception of that year. The occasion was as follows: In the beginning of that year there occurred a heavy fall of snow which melted so suddenly and caused such an overflow of the rivers that people really believed that a second deluge had come upon the earth. Many lives were lost, there was a great loss of property and of works of art, and desolation reigned far and wide both in the city of Rome itself and in the country districts. And yet this frightful inundation was but the forerunner of a still more dreadful calamity. The plague broke out and in a few days the Eternal City became depopulated, for all those who escaped the epidemic fled beyond the walls of the city so acutely infected. In the hope of arresting the progress of the destructive elements and of saving some of the other portions of the country, and other Christian nations, the Supreme Head of the Church established the festival of the Immaculate Conception for the whole

Catholic world and granted to the persons observing the day many indulgences.

To modern times, however, and to the glorious reign of Pope Pius IX. was reserved the privilege of placing the festival of the Immaculate Conception in the front rank of Mary's feasts and to set the crown, as it were, on the veneration of Mary.

PRAYER OF HOLY CHURCH.

O God, who, by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, didst prepare a worthy habitation for Thy divine Son, grant us through her intercession that we may preserve our hearts and souls pure and loyal to Thee who hast preserved her from all sin. Accept, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the grace-bringing victim whom we offer to Thee on the festival of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and grant that we, who believe that she was conceived without the stain of original sin, may be cleansed from all guilt of sin, through her powerful intercession.

While nourished with the comforting food of heaven, we implore, O Lord, Thy mercy that we, being strengthened by the powerful prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may never through any temptation be separated from Thee. And this we beg through Thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who with Thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

Pious tradition thus accounts for the origin of the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin: A simple, but very devout lay brother, a faithful client of Mary, once, as he was at prayer, heard the most entrancing strains of music. It was the 8th day of September. He asked God what this sweet music meant, and received for answer that the choirs of angels were celebrating in heaven the birthday of their Queen. Whereupon the hermit carried the news to the Pope, who established this festival in order that these praises of Mary might be sung on earth as well as in heaven. Each reader may give what credence he pleases to this simple legend. One thing is certain, we know no other reason why this festival is celebrated on the 8th of September. A great and learned and holy bishop, St. Antoninus, tells us, "Thy birth, O holy Mother of God, brought joy to the whole earth, for when the angels beheld this beautiful creature, they sang canticles of joy. These hymns of praise they repeat on the same day every year, as God has been pleased to reveal to a certain holy hermit in the woods." We have no positive information as to the precise time when the Church began to celebrate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. We only know that at a very early age, even in the first century of

Christianity, the birthday of St. John the Baptist was observed solemnly in the Church. May we not then, with much more reason, suppose that the faithful children of the early Church commemorated the birth of Mary, that chosen creature whose advent to the earth was the aurora of salvation to sinful man? It is certain that in Eastern countries this festival was kept by the Church in the fifth century, for St. Proclus, Patriarch, who died in the year 447 and had himself been a disciple of St. Chrysostom, has left extant a sermon which he preached on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. In Western Europe we find St. Ildephonsus, bishop of Toledo, in Spain, writing in the following strain in the year 658, "No saint's birthday is celebrated in the Catholic Church except that of our divine Saviour, Jesus Christ, that of His blessed Mother, and that of St. John the Baptist." In the eleventh century the observance had become universal in the Church, for St. Peter Damian exclaims, "The birth of the ever blessed Mother of God brings special and extraordinary joy to the hearts of men. Well may the whole human family shout with irrepressible joy and gladness; well may the whole Church linger at the cradle of the infant Mary and sing canticles of thanksgiving and joy; let us rejoice in the Lord and be glad on this day on which, while commemorating the birth of Mary, we celebrate the beginning of all our other festivals." We understand and know with more certainty what it was that gave rise to the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. The occasion was as follows: Pope Gregory IX., a brave and zealous defender of the liberties of the Church, died in the year 1241 while in the midst of a conflict with the Emperor Frederick II. who was persecuting the Church. The cardinals assem-

bled in conclave for the purpose of electing a successor to the Chair of Peter, but found it very difficult to make a choice, for their action was trammelled by the presence of the emperor, who was carrying on hostilities in Italy. They therefore decided to enrich the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin with an octave, if, by the aid of her intercession, they should succeed in making a speedy selection of a new Pope. Their vows were heard and accepted by Heaven ; very soon the choice fell upon the learned and pious Cardinal Godfrey, who, as Head of the Church, assumed the name of Celestine IV. Unhappily, as the Pontiff lived only fourteen days after his election he could not carry out the promises of the conclave. Hardly, however, had his successor, Innocent VI., assumed the tiara when he hastened to keep the promises. The institution of an octave to this festival only shows that the Church considers it wise and salutary for her children to call upon the Virgin Mother in the hour of private trial and in all afflictions of the Church.

PRAYER OF HOLY CHURCH.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to Thy servants the gift of heavenly grace, that those to whom the birth of the Blessed Virgin was the beginning of salvation, may in her holy festival obtain an increase of peace. Permit us, O Lord, to offer with pure intention of soul our gifts to Thee who, in the heart of the Blessed Virgin, prepared a dwelling without stain for Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord. Now, O Lord, that we have tasted and enjoyed in the annual commemoration of the birth of the Blessed Virgin the sweet mystery of the day, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst make this mystery a saving help for us in this life and a pledge of happiness in the life to come. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin.

The feast of Mary's Presentation in the temple was introduced into the Eastern Church in very early times. It had several names. The Greeks called it "The entrance or the introduction of the Blessed Virgin into the temple." The Arabs termed it "The progress of the Intercession into the temple." The Emperor Emmanuel Comnenus, who ascended the throne in the year 1143, raised this festival to the same rank as that of those high festivals which it was obligatory to keep throughout the whole empire. For four hundred years it was thus observed in the Eastern Church, when it was finally introduced into the West. One Philip of Maizé, a French nobleman, who, as ambassador of his king, spent some time in the island of Cyprus, took part in the solemnity held there on this day. The festival and its object pleased him very much, and the description which he gave of it to his king, Charles V., on his return, induced the king to introduce the festival into the kingdom of France. In order to augment the devotion of the people, the Popes Pius II. and Paul II. granted several indulgences to all those faithful who would assist at divine service on that festival. During the pontificate of Pius V., who, on account of the multitude of abuses that were creeping in on all

sides, yielded to the request of many and diminished the holy days, this feast was also suppressed, at least in the city of Rome. But it was only for a short time. At the urgent solicitation of a celebrated Jesuit, Father Francis Turien, who in many learned essays had studied the circumstances of the Blessed Virgin's stay in the temple, the case was reopened under Pope Sixtus for further consideration. In consequence of these investigations Pope Sixtus V., in the year 1585 decreed that this festival of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin in the temple, a feast celebrated from the earliest times with great pomp and devotion, should take its place among the other festivals of the Blessed Virgin and if in any place it had fallen into disuse, it should be restored and piously observed. Hence this Pope must be regarded as the one who made this festival of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin a festival of the universal Church.

A beautiful practice on this festival exists in many communities of priests, or in ecclesiastical seminaries, where young men are trained to live in community life. In honor of and in commemoration of the Blessed Virgin's entrance into the temple, and of her dedication to the service of the Lord, these young men solemnly renew their promise to serve God cheerfully in His holy sanctuary. During the public office of the Church, one of their number, clad in a white surplice, and holding in his hand a burning taper, stands before the altar and pronounces aloud in a clear voice the words of the Psalmist David, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me. The lines are fallen unto me in goodly places, for my inheritance is goodly to me." To be sure, the calling to the priesthood is a sublime inheritance, a sacred calling and

a glorious portion. But the simple faithful, also, are called to the service of God and should, therefore, on this day offer themselves up to God in union with the child Mary. Yes, glorious indeed is our portion, for the Lord our God is our inheritance.

PRAYER OF HOLY CHURCH.

O God, who wast pleased to permit Mary, the ever pure and Blessed Virgin, to be presented on this day in the temple as the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, grant, we beseech Thee, that we, through her intercession, may deserve to appear in the temple of Thy glory.

Through Thy mercies, O Lord, and by the intercession of the ever pure and Blessed Virgin, may this Presentation of Mary contribute to our peace in this life and happiness in the next.

Now that we have tasted, O Lord, the nourishing food of our salvation, grant that we may be always shielded by the protecting arm of the ever pure and Blessed Mary in whose honor we have offered this victim to Thy majesty, —through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

Candlemas Day.

We cannot state with certainty when the festival of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin was first established in the Church. We only know that it was observed in the city of Jerusalem during the century that followed immediately after the death of Christ. During a severe epidemic that raged in the city of Constantinople, in the year 541, the Emperor Justinian ordered the "Feast of the Meeting" to be kept every year on the 2d of February. Among the Greeks it was called "The Meeting," because on this day the gray-haired Simeon met the divine Child in the Temple.

This feast must have been introduced into the city of Rome by Pope Gelasius about the year 494. The pagan Romans had gradually, by war and conquest, subjugated nearly all the nations of the earth. The time appointed for all these conquered people to pay tribute to their conquerors was in the month of February, which, on that account, very naturally became a season of pleasure and dissipation in the metropolis. As a way of returning thanks to the gods, nightly processions were formed, in which each of the participants carried a burning torch. With a view of keeping the Christians away from these ceremonies and to utilize the civil festivities to the

spiritual advantage of his flock, Pope Gelasius ordered that for the future, on the 2d of February, which even at that time was called the feast of the Purification, a solemn procession with lighted tapers should take place to some church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

From the custom of blessing candles on this day and carrying them in procession, comes our old, familiar name of this festival, that is to say, Candlemas Day, or the day for the Mass with candles. The meaning of these burning candles may best be learned from the words of the prayers used by the priest when blessing them: "O Lord Jesus Christ, true Light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, pour forth Thy blessing on these candles and sanctify them with the light of Thy grace, and mercifully grant that even as these lights, kindled by a visible flame, dispel the gloom of night, so also our hearts, made bright by an invisible fire, that is, by the splendor of the Holy Ghost, may be freed from the blindness of all vices, that the eyes of our minds being purified, we may be enabled to see such things as are pleasing to Thee and profitable to our salvation that so, after the dark perils of this life, we may attain to reach light unfading."

Dear Christian, many years ago the priest who baptized you, gave to your sponsors a burning light and pronounced the following significant words which, although addressed to them, were meant for you, "Receive this burning light; keep thy baptism without stain; observe the commandments of God, that when the Lord shall come to the nuptial feast thou mayest go forth to meet Him together with all the saints and angels of the heavenly court, and mayest thou have life everlasting and live forever and ever, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen."

Remember this warning well, and when, during the services of the holy Church, you see the candles burning brightly on the altar, then remember that you, too, should burn brightly by your good works in the eyes of men, of God and of the angels. If you follow this practice you will not be terrified when at the hour of your death the attending priest will reach you the blessed candle and pronounce the words, "Receive this burning light; it will be to thee a figure of Jesus Christ and of what we ourselves should be when we go to meet Him. Jesus Christ is our Light and we should hasten to meet Him with burning love."

PRAYER OF HOLY CHURCH.

Almighty and eternal God, bowing before Thy majesty we humbly beseech Thee that, as on this day Thy only Son was presented in the temple under the outward form of our nature, Thou wouldst also permit us to be presented to Thee with clean hearts and souls.

Hear, O Lord, our prayer and direct the help of Thy mercy towards us, so that the gifts that we bring to Thee may be made worthy of Thee and acceptable to Thy majesty.

Permit, O Lord, that the divine mysteries which Thou hast graciously established for our restoration, may, through the intercession of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, contribute to our peace here below and to our eternal salvation hereafter—through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.

THE celebration of the festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin dates from remote antiquity. Indeed, so ancient is this "Lady Day in Spring" that all positive traces of its formal and solemn institution are lost in the dim twilight of antiquity. It is the pious belief of many learned men that it was established by the apostles themselves. It is also natural to suppose that our holy Mother herself would, as the day came round each year, commemorate with special devotion and reverence that momentous anniversary on which such priceless graces and blessings had been vouchsafed to herself and to all mankind, for on that day the Eternal Word had taken flesh in her chaste womb. The apostles, on their part, observing Mary's pious practice of thanksgiving to God and considering it to be their duty to imitate the holy Mother of God, gave instructions wherever they went that this anniversary should be kept with due solemnity and devotion. Thus the festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin was established throughout the Church from the very beginning, although under different names or titles. It was variously known as "The Conception of Christ," "The Heralding of Christ," "The Announcement of the Lord," "The Beginning of

Redemption," "The Feast of the Glad Tidings," and by even other no less significant titles. All these names express plainly the same thing, namely, that on this day was solemnized the great and grace-bringing mystery of the Incarnation of Christ in Mary, the ever pure Virgin. But it is not only on the 25th of March that the joyous bells summon us to church and remind us of the important moment when, very nearly two thousand years ago, the angel Gabriel brought the glad tidings of salvation for all men to a simple maiden in a lowly cot at Nazareth. Three times each day are we reminded, by the voices of the bells, in the Angelus or "Angelical Salutation."

This beautiful devotion, so dear to the hearts of the Catholic world, was not instituted in the beginning, nor all at once, but came gradually into the different countries of Christendom. In the year 1327 Pope John XXII. issued orders that the faithful should recite three "Hail Marys" each time that the evening bells proclaimed the eve of a festival. A council of bishops and priests assembled in the city of Paris, in the year 1346, enforced this mandate of the Pope very strictly, and soon after the German bishops followed their example. These latter merely added a condition that the people should pray for the preservation of peace. In the course of time the morning devotion was added to the evening salutation. As early as 1360 the French bishops ordered that the bells should be rung for the morning as well as for the evening devotion. About the year 1400 this custom was introduced into the German countries by order of the bishops. As yet the same prayers were not said in the different countries—in some five "Our Fathers" were said in honor of the five wounds of Our Lord; in other

places seven "Hail Marys" in honor of the seven joys of the Blessed Virgin; while in some other places only three "Hail Marys" were recited. It was in the ancient city of Strasbourg that, in 1549, this devotion was first called the Angelus, or the "Devotion of the Angelical Salutation." Again not long after, the custom arose of ringing the bells at midday. This was begun by the Carthusians of France. At about this period in the history of Christendom, the Turks were threatening the peace of Europe; hence these prayers were addressed to Heaven in order to obtain the protection of Mary against these cruel and mighty enemies; and in some places the Angelus was called "The Turk's Alarm." The other portions of the exercises, such as the words, "The angel of the Lord declared," etc., are mentioned in the year 1605 as a very ancient and well-known form of words in frequent use among the faithful. Therefore the custom has prevailed universally in the Church for more than two centuries and a half, inviting the faithful to recite this beautiful devotion of the Angelus three times a day, namely, at morning, noon and night. To-day, in Catholic lands, the bells aloft in the towering cathedral steeple, as well as in the belfry of the chapel in the woods, peal forth three times a day the welcome invitation to the devotion of the Angelus.

Pope Benedict XIII. granted a plenary indulgence to all those who, on a chosen day of the month, after a worthy reception of the sacraments, will say piously, on their knees, whether in the morning, at noon, or at night, at the sound of the bells, three "Hail Marys," adding the prayers of the Church. An indulgence of one hundred days is also granted to each person who recites the prayer of the Angelus every time the bell rings. In order

to gain these indulgences we must say these prayers on our knees, except on Saturday evening and Sunday and during the Easter time, when we should say them standing. (14th of September, 1742. Benedict XIV., April 20, 1742.)

PRAYER OF HOLY CHURCH.

O God, who wert pleased that Thy Word should, at the message of the angel, take flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant unto Thy supplicants that we, who believe her truly to be the Mother of God, may be helped by her intercession with Thee.

Confirm in our minds, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the sacraments of the true faith, that we, who acknowledge Him who was born of the Virgin to be true God and true man, may, by the saving power of His resurrection, attain to reach everlasting gladness.

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

The Feast of the Seven Dolors.

SOMETHING more than four hundred years ago, in the kingdom of Bohemia, a wicked, if not demented, monk, by the name of John Huss, fell into heresy and founded a sect. His wild followers, who were known as Hussites, made themselves notorious by various atrocities, one of which was to break and destroy most maliciously the images of the crucified Redeemer and of His blessed Mother. Naturally this conduct incensed the Catholics very much. Among those whose hearts were deeply lacerated by the insults offered to the pictures, and indirectly to the persons of Our Lord and His blessed Mother, was Theodoric, archbishop of Cologne, and this prelate, eager to make amends for these outrages on religion, consulted the other bishops of his province. A council was called at Cologne in 1412, at which it was resolved to commemorate every year on a Friday in Lent the seven sorrows of our blessed Mother. In the wording of their decree are beautifully expressed the sentiments that animated their hearts. The festival was to be celebrated "to honor the holy and immaculate Mother of God, Mary, who prayed with such confidence and fortitude at the foot of the cross for poor sinners, and whose praises cannot be sufficiently lauded, even if all the sands on the seashore had tongues to sing

them." It also further decreed that the feast shall contribute "to commemorate and honor the pain and anguish which the sorrowing Mother suffered when Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, hanging with outstretched arms on the cross, commended her to the care of the holy evangelist, St. John." Finally, the bishops desired the feast to be observed in order that "Our Lord, Jesus Christ, being thus appeased, might lift the cloud of error from the eyes and hearts of the Hussites, bring them back to the Catholic faith, and preserve the faithful from the evils of heresy."

From Germany the observance of this feast spread into other lands. This was the more easily effected inasmuch as, by the zealous efforts of the Order of the Servites, or, as they were also called, the Servants of Mary Sorrowing, this pious devotion was well known and well beloved in the Church. Although the festival of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin is not a holy day of obligation in the Church, yet, on the Friday preceding Palm Sunday, the Christian faithful frequent in large numbers those churches and chapels in which are found the venerated pictures or statues of Our Lady of Sorrows. Such places of pilgrimage are very numerous, especially in Catholic countries. In order to foster this devotion among her children the Church has generously opened her treasury and poured out bountifully her treasures of graces and enriched the various exercises of devotion to the Mother of Sorrows with many indulgences. Thus, for example, we can gain an indulgence of a hundred days as often as we recite piously the beautiful hymn, "Stabat Mater," in the tender words of which we can best learn the meaning of this festival. (Innocent XI. September, 1681.)

Holy Mother! pierce me through,
In my heart each wound renew

Of my Saviour crucified;
Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.

PRAYER OF HOLY CHURCH.

O God, at whose sufferings the tender soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary was, according to the prophecy of the venerable Simeon, pierced by a sword of grief, mercifully grant that we, who solemnly honor her sad martyrdom, may, through her glorious merits, and by the prayers of all the saints who persevered under the cross in fidelity, be made sharers in the precious fruit of Thy Passion and death.

O Lord Jesus Christ, in humble supplication we bring Thee our petitions and other offerings, while meditating affectionately on the sorrows of Thy Mother's gentle heart. **Amen.**

CHAPTER X.

The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin.

The simple sons of St. Francis of Assisi were the first to commemorate with special devotion the journey of the patient and humble maiden of Nazareth across the mountainous country to visit her cousin, St. Elizabeth. At a meeting of the chief members of the Order, held in the year 1263, the great St. Bonaventure offered the proposition and issued an ordinance to the entire Order, requiring the members to solemnize in a special manner the festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin. By degrees the deep meaning of this festival became better and more generally understood by the laity, who soon learned to love and cherish it. But a very great calamity was the occasion of introducing the feast throughout the whole Church. This was the great schism which occurred during the fourteenth century. Divine Providence permitted that an unworthy man should lay claim to the authority of St. Peter, though a lawful Pope then presided over the Church. This Anti-Pope, as he was called, had a considerable following of blinded persons. Strife, contention, and anger arose and spread throughout a large portion of Christendom. In the midst of these sufferings of the Church of God, certain good and pious men conceived the thought that it might be the will of Heaven

that Mary should, under God, be instrumental in putting an end to this scandalous schism. In order to invoke her assistance in a more special and solemn manner, the feast of the Visitation was established throughout all the lands of Christendom. Pope Urban VI. would not set himself against what he considered to be the will of God, and entrusted to a learned cardinal the duty of compiling an office suitable to the feast and corresponding to the events commemorated. He also intended to prescribe, by a special bull, the observance of the festival, but he died suddenly and unexpectedly, before he could carry out his pious intentions. His successor, however, Boniface IX., was no less zealous in his devotion to Mary. In a bull, dated November the 9th, 1339, he decreed "that the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary should be solemnized with hymns of triumph, with canticles of joy and with exultation of heart and soul." During the Council of Florence, when the Greek Church fraternized with the Latin, this feast occurred, and was made a veritable festival of peace, bringing harmony and reconciliation, and giving joy to the Western, or Latin, Church. It became a bond of union between East and West. Even in later times it has been a day on which all differences between the Latins and Greeks, save the essential ones of faith and morals, were forgotten.

It was on this festival, namely, on the 2d of July, 1849, that the French army entered Rome, in defence of the Pope's rights, and put an end to the so-called republic of Mazzini and Garibaldi. The history of this absurd and unlawful republic is well known. In the very beginning of his reign Pius IX., of holy memory, out of love and affection for his lawful subjects in the States of the Church, had instituted reforms, extended many bene-

fits and favors, and made many improvements. At first all rejoiced, and were filled with gratitude towards the benevolent Pontiff. But the restless revolutionists resolved to turn this very goodness of heart of the Pope against himself. They persisted in inciting the thoughtless multitude to demand the most unreasonable concessions, and such as were not in the power of the Pope to grant. The people then became more importunate and dissatisfied, and finally, giving too willing an ear to the evil advice and suggestions of their crafty and malicious leaders, they began to hate their Pope and king—so that, at last, his life was not safe within the walls of Rome. He therefore deemed it prudent to yield to the urgent request of his friends, left the city and went to Gaeta in the kingdom of Naples. Hereupon Garibaldi and Mazzini came to Rome. The inhabitants soon began to realize fully and painfully what it was to have Rome without a Pope. Those were indeed days of terror and desolation. The clergy were hunted down, the temples were desecrated, the property of the Church was seized, the bells and sacred vessels were melted down and the relics of the saints, aye, the Blessed Sacrament itself was profaned. Many of the clergy were massacred. To put an end to these horrors Catholic France sent her brave soldiers. After a short siege the city was taken from the Garibaldians, on the festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, July the 2d, 1849. Towards evening of that day the French army marched into Rome. The Eternal City was free. The coincidence of the feast with the liberation of the city seemed to Pius IX. to be providential. Accordingly he had hardly returned to Rome, in the spring of 1850, amid the rejoicings of his subjects, when he gave orders in a special decree, that for all future time the

feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary should be kept as a feast day, in order to manifest gratitude to God and His blessed Mother for the happy deliverance of the Holy See from its worst enemies.

PRAYER OF HOLY CHURCH.

Unto Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, do Thou impart the gift of heavenly grace, that as the childbirth of the Blessed Virgin was unto them the beginning of salvation, so the prayerful solemnity of the Visitation may give them an increase of peace.

Receive, O Lord, these prayers and gifts; and that they may be worthy of Thy regard, oh, let us be helped by the prayers of Thy saints.

Refreshed by communion with the sacred body and precious blood, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our God, that the mystery which we have performed with a loving devotion may redound to our sure redemption.

CHAPTER XI.

The Festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The festival of the Assumption, or, as our ancestors called it, "Lady Day in Harvest," is without doubt the first and greatest of all the feast days of the Blessed Virgin. It is one of great antiquity. Many learned writers hold the opinion that it was solemnized away back in the days of the apostles, though there are some who dispute this opinion. Only very recently, in the year 1858, there was discovered in the ancient subterranean chapel of St. Clement, in Rome, an old picture dating from the age of Pope Leo IV. and representing the Assumption, thus showing that in the ninth century, at least, the belief in this glorious privilege of Mary was held by the faithful of the Church. Devotion to the Assumption, and observance of the festival itself, received a strong impetus in the Church immediately after the Council of Ephesus, which was held in the year 431.

At this Council Mary was declared by the solemn voice of the Church to be really and truly the Mother of God, and from that time forward the love and veneration for our blessed Lady were widely diffused and vastly augmented. This festival was introduced into Rome by Pope Damasus, who occupied the chair of Peter from 366 to

384. Again, Pope Sergius, who governed the Church between the years 687 and 701, decreed that, on this festival, a procession in honor of Mary should take place from the Church of St. Adrian. Hence the feast itself must have been known before that time. It was always preceded by a vigil and a strict fast, as was then the custom in regard to all the great festivals of the Church, such as Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. An octave was added later by Pope Leo IV., during whose pontificate there appeared in Rome, near the Church of St. Lucy, a dragon, or basilisk, which poisoned every passer-by by its mere look. All who came near this beast met certain and sudden death. The Pope, after fortifying himself by prayer and fasting, went in solemn procession, on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, to the dreaded place and approaching the entrance to the animal's den, prayed fervently to Heaven, in union with all the people, for deliverance from this frightful plague. His prayer was heard, the beast disappeared, and from that time forward all could pass the place in safety. It was in thanksgiving for this miracle that the octave of eight days was added to the festival. In England, Alfred the Great ordered the mystery to be commemorated annually, during a whole week, during which time no work was to be required from the working people. In Germany the so-called "Blessing of Crops" takes place. This custom took its rise from an old superstitious practice of the pagans. At a certain fixed hour of the night, and amid strange and weird ceremonies, they used to gather different kinds of vegetables and roots, and then use them for wicked purposes. In order to abolish these pagan superstitions, the bishops introduced the annual Christian ceremony of invoking the blessing of God on

the fruits of the earth during harvest-time. The people assembled in their Catholic temples, each one carrying some kind of vegetable or plant from his farm, and the priests then called upon the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost to send down, through the intercession of our blessed Lady, a blessing on all the crops of the season. Then all together prayed "that all who should partake of these fruits of the earth might receive profit to soul and body, and, by virtue of Mary's intercession, might be enabled to bring forth such spiritual fruits of sanctity that they might be found worthy to approach the gates of heaven, surrounded by the sweet fragrance of their virtues." The people then carried these blessed plants to their homes where they so placed them that they might serve as reminders that all good works and all happy results are to be ascribed to the power of God and the prayers of His Church.

The beautiful practice of blessing, on this festival, flowers and plants and fruits, has also another important meaning. Mary is the chosen flower that bloomed from David's stock, and she it is who yielded to us that most precious of heavenly fruits, Jesus Christ Himself, Our Saviour. In the epistle read in the Mass of "Lady Day in Harvest," our blessed Mother, on account of her "fulness of grace," of her beauty and majesty, of her sweet and fragrant virtues, is likened to the stately cedars of Libanus, to the fair cypress tree of Hamon, to the comely olive tree, to the blushing rose, to the healing balsam, and to the savory cinnamon tree. Tradition informs us that the apostles found in her grave fresh roses and other sweet flowers, after she had left this earth to be assumed into heaven. Justly, then, does the Church choose this day for the blessing of the

products of the earth, and as the festival of fruits and flowers.

PRAYER OF HOLY CHURCH.

Forgive, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the offences of Thy servants, that we, who of ourselves cannot please Thee, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of Thy Son, Our Lord.

May the prayer of the Mother of God come to the aid of Thy people, O Lord, that we may experience her intercession for us in heavenly glory, whom we know to have passed out of this life to satisfy the condition of our mortality.

We who have been made partakers of the heavenly Table, implore Thy mercy, O Lord, Our God, that we, who celebrate the Assumption of the Mother of God, may, by her intercession, be delivered from all impending evils.

CHAPTER XII.

Mary's Espousals.

As early as the fifteenth century the festival of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin was solemnized in the Church. At that period, that is to say, about four hundred years ago, there lived at Chartres, a town not far from Paris, in France, a holy priest who entertained the most ardent and tender veneration for our blessed Lady and her chaste spouse, St. Joseph. This pious man made in his last will and testament a provision that every year, at the solemn celebration of the feast of the Espousals, in his parish church, a special devotion for the benefit of his soul should be made to St. Joseph. The clergy connected with the church consulted with Gerson, the chancellor of the Paris University, a man renowned for sanctity and learning, on the best way of carrying out the requirements of this bequest and of fulfilling the wishes of the deceased priest. The Pope's permission having been obtained, Gerson composed the prayers appropriate to the circumstances and which were ever afterwards recited regularly on this feast, throughout the diocese of Chartres.

But other places and congregations were anxious to participate in this devotion. Accordingly Pope Paul III. gave permission to the Franciscans to introduce the

festival into their Order, and Pope Benedict XIII. finally extended the privilege to the universal Church.

In most places the festival was solemnized with a quiet and unostentatious piety, but in Perugia, a town in central Italy, it was celebrated with great external pomp as well as with deep devotion. In the cathedral of Perugia there is a beautiful chapel dedicated to the mystery of Mary's espousals, and above the altar, built in the wall, there is a strong iron reliquary which contains a most precious relic, the bridal ring used at the wedding of St. Joseph and the Blessed Lady. Only once a year is this ring exhibited to the veneration of the crowds of faithful who flock to the church on the festival. It is not made of gold or silver, but from a kind of stone called onyx, and it hangs by a silken cord in a golden relic-ostensory. Antiquarians assure us that such bridal rings, wrought from rare stone, were in frequent use among the Jews.

Ancient traditions tell us that at the time of her death, Mary entrusted the ring to St. John, who subsequently brought it to Rome for the Christian congregation which existed there. So great was the veneration shown by the Christians for this ring that the prayers and other modes of this veneration induced the pagans to believe that there must be some mysterious power concealed within the ring—so they stole it and brought it to the emperor. But a member of the emperor's family, one who had become a Catholic, fled with the jewel to Clusium, a town in the States of the Church. Here she was apprehended and underwent a martyr's glorious death, and Marcus, the priest of the congregation, buried the ring with her body in order to keep it from falling into the hands of her pagan persecutors. For more than three hundred years nothing was known of the whereabouts of this

precious ring, till about the year 800, when the grave was discovered and in it a stone tablet which bore the inscription, "Here lies, in peace, the body of Mustiola with the bridal ring of Mary." Naturally the ring was carried amid the rejoicing of the people, and with deep reverence, to the church, where it was publicly exposed to the great veneration of the multitude. This precious relic remained in Clusium till the year 1473 when it was secretly and unlawfully taken by a Franciscan Brother who carried it to the church of his Order in Perugia, in which city it has remained to the present day, an object of love and veneration.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Festival of Mary, Help of Christians.

It was Pope Pius V. who, after the Christian victory over the Turks at Lepanto, added to the many fond titles of the Blessed Virgin that of "Help of Christians," and ordered the same to be inserted in the litany of Loretto. The festival, however, of "Help of Christians" is of very recent date. In order to understand the origin of this feast it is necessary to relate a brief chapter of very modern Church history, namely, the history of a great sufferer and of a great tyrant—of Pius VII., and Napoleon I.

When General Bonaparte secured his position of power in France, he affected the greatest respect for the Catholic Church. With a view of furthering his own ambitious projects he repealed such of the revolutionary measures as militated against religion, repaired the churches and reopened them for divine service, and, in accord with the Sovereign Pontiff, provided the desolated flocks of God's people with good and zealous priests and bishops. On being proclaimed emperor in 1804, Napoleon wished to be crowned by the Pope. Pius VII. consented, though with reluctance, to the emperor's desires and, with much inconvenience travelled, in the winter season, across the Alps from Rome to Paris.

By this act of condescension he hoped to so conciliate the emperor as to prevent any future assaults upon the rights of the Church. But he met with disappointment. According as the power and influence of Napoleon increased, the more did he seek to tyrannize over the Church. He was foolish and wicked enough to expect that the Pope would declare null and void the lawful marriage between the emperor's brother and his lawful wife, and that the Pontiff would make war wantonly on Napoleon's supposed enemies. Because Pius would not comply with these requirements Napoleon declared the states of the Church discontinued as a sovereign State. The Pope issued a solemn decree of excommunication against the emperor. On the night between the 4th and 5th of July a body of French soldiers invaded the Vatican palace and, pushing their way into the very sleeping apartments of the Pope, took him prisoner and, in company with his favorite friend, Cardinal Pacca, hurried him into a closed carriage and took him out of Rome. Nor was the Sovereign Pontiff permitted to stay anywhere within the boundaries of his own territory. After having been brought to France, he was taken back to Savona, a small town near Genoa, where Napoleon kept him a prisoner during three long and painful years. Although, at first, the saintly prisoner was treated with comparative mildness, as time wore on his grievances were multiplied and aggravated. All his faithful friends were forbidden to see him. No bishop was permitted to speak to him, every letter to him was intercepted and read, even his breviary was taken from him, out of his very hands. Meanwhile he was in constant receipt of information from all quarters, that his cardinals had been abused, arrested and banished, as well as many bishops.

Pius VII. felt that his situation was indeed a lonely one. Yet he always relied on assistance from Heaven. He himself prayed, and he instructed others to pray, to the Blessed Virgin for deliverance of the Church. Meanwhile Napoleon was adding victory to victory and triumph to triumph. His power was daily increasing, his empire was spreading on all sides, and when, just at this time, a son was born to him, he named him the king of Rome. He laughed at the bulls of the Pope, saying, with a sneer, "Excommunication will not cause the arms to drop from my soldiers' hands." But yet, in 1812, in the unfortunate expedition to Moscow, the arms did really fall from the frozen hands of the French soldiers. But the adverse fortunes of Napoleon brought no relief to the imprisoned Head of the Church who, that same year, received orders to repair to Paris, and without any sign of his Papal office. Again the Pope was compelled to make another fatiguing journey, in a closed and strictly guarded carriage. Although all along the road he was so feeble and sick that he received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction in preparation for his expected death, he was not permitted to rest for a single night. His food was given to him in his carriage, in which, also, he was compelled to pass the nights. At length, in an almost dying condition, he reached Fontainebleau. Here he encountered new injuries and insults, and hardships of mind and body. Not only was he kept aloof from every wise and conscientious counsellor, but he was besieged by crowds of unworthy sons of the Church, the minions of Napoleon, who sought to break down the Pope's constancy and to persuade him to yield to the iniquitous demands of his enemy. Napoleon himself came, at first with smiles and fair words, and afterwards with threats and insults. At one time the

Holy Father, completely broken down with suffering, showed a momentary weakness. At once, however, he recalled his words publicly, undismayed by the storming rage of his tyrannical oppressor. At length Providence interfered. In October, 1813, Napoleon lost the battle at Leipsic, and in January of the following year he set the Pope free, and a few months later he signed, at that same palace of Fontainebleau, his own abdication of power, almost on the very day that saw Pius VII. triumphantly enter his own city of Rome, the 24th of May. The Pope might well shed tears of joy, and of gratitude to God, when he saw once more the door of his own home, from the portals of which he had given his last blessing to his subjects as he was being torn away from their midst by his ruthless captors.

Yet the Pope's trials were not at an end. He was once more to be an exile. Napoleon having escaped from his prison on the isle of Elba, came again to France to try his fortune and succeeded again in making himself emperor of the French. His friend and relative, General Murat, again seized the kingdom of Naples and dispatched troops to assault the city of Rome. Pius VII. was compelled to leave the city and to betake himself to Genoa, where the king of Sardinia received him with profuse hospitality and unbounded respect and reverence. This time the afflicted Pontiff foretold that his exile would be of short duration. Sure enough, in a little over three months Napoleon's power was overthrown and Murat's projects were brought to grief. Before setting out on his return to Rome the Pope, on the 10th of May, 1815, with much pomp and piety, and in presence of the royal family, and of great multitudes of the faithful laity, solemnly crowned the miraculous image of the Mother of

God in Savona, where he had passed the days of this his latest exile. On the 7th of June he once more returned to Rome in triumph. Thus Pius VII. again assumed his seat in the chair of Peter, while Napoleon, his persecutor, was a prisoner on the distant and lonely island of St. Helena. All things considered, this turn of events approached very nearly to a miracle, if it were not really one. In order, therefore, to make known to whom he was indebted, next to God, for this happy state of affairs, he ordered, on the 16th of September, 1816, that every year, on the 24th of May, the festival of "Mary, help of Christians" should be kept a day of devotion throughout the Church, in commemoration of his happy restoration to the rights and dignities of the pontificate and of his release from the hands of his enemies.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Festival of Mary, Queen of the Holy Rosary.

Among the more modern festivals of the holy Mother of God there is hardly any one that owes its institution to so important and happy an event as does the festival of the Rosary. It commemorates, and recalls to our minds, battle and victory, for it was a fierce battle, fought under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, that gave rise to its establishment. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century Christendom had no enemies so formidable and merciless as the Turks. These savage warriors, in their love of power, but more especially on account of their hatred for Christianity, and of their desire of placing the crescent above the cross, succeeded, in 1453, in sacking Constantinople, and then made gigantic efforts to subjugate all Europe and to bring it under tribute to their powerful emperors and generals. The rulers of Christendom, instead of making a united effort to repel these invaders, were engaged in making petty war upon each other. It was in vain that the Popes counselled peace among Christian princes and exhorted them to united action against a common enemy from without. Finally, when the island of Cyprus fell into the hands of the Mohammedan, Selim II., Pope Pius V. succeeded in forming between Spain and Venice, and some Italian

provinces, an alliance for self-defence against the Turks. An expedition was formed, to which the Pope contributed men and ships of war. On the 7th of October, 1571, which was Sunday, the two fleets met near Lepanto. The Christians, under the command of Don John of Austria, numbered two hundred galleys. The Turks had the same number, together with seventy frigates. When the two contending forces were drawn up in battle array, Don John of Austria gave orders to unfurl the banner which had been presented by the Pope. The chaplains on the vessels called to prayer and at once all the soldiers fell upon their knees. The Turks, on their side, sounded their trumpets and, amid a fearful yell, opened fire on the Christians. The roar of cannon from both sides was deafening, and the cloud of smoke shut out the vessels from sight of the contending parties. During five hours the fight continued to rage, until at last the Turks gave way and the victory of the Christians was complete. The Turkish loss in killed and wounded, and in vessels, was appalling. Of their vessels, about one hundred and thirty fell into the hands of the Christians, and ninety more went to the bottom of the sea. The very waters were red with the blood of the thirty thousand Turks that were slain in the conflict. Meanwhile, all over Europe, the members of the Rosary Confraternity were unceasing in the recitation of the beads. In the churches of Rome the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was going on, and the Pope himself was buried in fervent prayer. Suddenly he arose, hastened towards a window and, opening it, he stood for a few minutes looking out in silence. Suddenly his features were lighted up with signs of deep emotion. Then he cried out aloud in joyous accents to his surrounding

attendants, "Hurry to the church to give God thanks for the great victory He has granted us." It was the very moment of victory at Lepanto. The joy produced by the news of this decisive victory was universal and heart-felt, and all attributed the success of the Christian army, and the consequent deliverance of all Christendom from the Turks, to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Soon after, the Pope decreed that every year, on the first Sunday in October, at the public service, a commemoration should be made of Our Lady of Victory. At a later date Pope Gregory XIII. ordered that in all churches in which there were Confraternities of the Rosary, a festival of thanksgiving should be held in honor of the Queen of the Rosary. Other subsequent triumphs of the cross, attributable evidently to the prayers of Mary, had the effect of causing this festival to be extended throughout the whole Church. The Turks soon recovered from their great defeat at Lepanto, and having reorganized and recruited their forces, began again to threaten Christian Europe. In the spring of 1683 an enormous army marched from Constantinople towards the West. The forces were two hundred thousand men with three hundred cannon, two thousand camels, and ten thousand wagons. The Sultan boasted that he would stable his horse in St. Peter's Church in Rome. This immense army marched towards the imperial city of Vienna and on the 14th of July commenced a deliberate siege before it, covering a space of several miles. A continuous fire was kept up on the city, and it was undermined. Even the elements seemed to conspire against the beleaguered capital, for a succession of violent storms, a calamitous hindrance, added to the horrors of the siege. The inhabitants behaved with commendable fortitude,

for, beside the sword of the enemy they had to contend with a fearful malady that broke out among the soldiers. The sufferings of the beleaguered people had become extreme, when at last help came. Sobieski, the king of Poland, was coming to their relief with a large army. On the 12th of September he engaged in battle with the Turks. The Christians were eighty thousand men against two hundred thousand of the enemy. But on the morning of battle the officers had received holy communion and the soldiers had knelt for the blessings of their chaplains, while the churches of Vienna were crowded with the citizens who prayed to the Mother of God for relief. Their prayer was heard. That same evening the Turks were fleeing in wild disorder, completely defeated by the Christian forces. Vienna was delivered from its perils and sufferings. The pious emperor of Austria, Leopold I., anxious to manifest to the Mother of God his heart-felt gratitude for this signal triumph, besought Pope Innocent XII. to establish the festival of the Rosary throughout the whole Church. The sudden death of the Pontiff prevented the carrying out of this pious wish, but what he had not the happiness of doing himself was done by his successor, Pope Clement XI. The measure was hastened by the fact that, while at the command of the Pope, in 1716, the festival of the Rosary was being celebrated in Rome by public devotions, new victories over the enemy were obtained in Hungary and in the island of Corfu. By a bull, dated October 3, 1716, the whole Church was commanded to keep, for all time, the first Sunday of October as the festival of the Holy Rosary.

CHAPTER XV.

Saturday Consecrated to the Blessed Virgin.

In order to maintain in the hearts of her children a tender devotion to the Mother of God, our holy Church has been pleased to set apart every Saturday of the year as a day of special devotion to Mary. It is quite certain that this custom is very ancient, having existed in the first centuries of Christianity.

As a day sacred to Mary, Saturday has entered into the regular routine of ecclesiastical life. The Fathers who took part in the Council of Clermont, held in November, 1095, during the pontificate of Pope Urban II., decreed that votive Masses and the office of the Blessed Virgin should be sung on every Saturday. This practice still continues throughout the Church, unless some higher feast falls on that day.

But why has Saturday been consecrated to Mary full of grace? Saturday is the day of sacred rest. On that day God rested after His work during the preceding six days of creation, as we learn from Holy Scripture. Mary was the delight of the adorable Trinity. In her heart reposed the Holy Ghost. For several months her chaste womb was the chosen resting-place of the Son of the Eternal Father, hence this day of rest has been specially given up to her service by pious Christians.

Saturday is the preparation for Sunday, the portal of the day of rest, which itself is the symbol of eternal rest. The Blessed Virgin is called the gate or portal of heaven. Through her do we hope to enter into eternal rest.

Saturday is the day intervening between Friday, the great day of atonement, and Sunday, which is the great day of the Resurrection. So, too, is Mary, as Mother of the Mediator, the intervening medium and mediatrix between human guilt and God's grace. Saturday is, as it were, a beautiful portal dedicated to the Mother of God. from which man steps into the sanctuary of God itself.

St. Bernard teaches that the Catholic Church has made Saturday sacred to our blessed Lady in order to incite us to honor the remembrance of her grief and desolation, and withal her unshaken faith on the day following the death of her divine Son. Animated with like sentiments, Pope Innocent I. had long before, namely, about the year 417, decreed that Saturday should be observed as a day of abstinence in honor of Mary's sorrows.

Many of the saints considered it an honor and a privilege to die on a Saturday, and to obtain that grace they used to redouble their prayers on that day, as well as their alms and mortifications.

St. Louis made it a constant practice to perform every Saturday the touching ceremony of washing the feet of several poor persons and of afterwards waiting upon them at table. He also made provision for Masses to be celebrated on every Saturday of the year in the Church of Our Lady of Chartres, and desired, as far as the rubrics of the Church would permit, that these Masses should be votive Masses to the Blessed Virgin.

In Rome Saturday is a day of affectionate devotion,

for Rome is the city of Mary. There one cannot help feeling that the day is a day dedicated to Our Lady. All the lamps before the generous number of her images burn more brightly, and fervent prayers and joyous hymns rise up on all sides from the hearts of the faithful to the Virgin full of grace. During the morning a solemn Mass is offered up in many churches, in order to obtain the intercession of the "refuge of sinners." In the evening the iron tongues of the bells belonging to the many churches dedicated to Mary peal forth the praises of the Mother of the Redeemer. And although the faithful flock in crowds to all the churches, yet they give the preference when possible to the favorite church, to the most beautiful of all the churches dedicated to God under her invocation, namely, the Church of St. Mary Major. Under the lofty vaults of this majestic temple a countless throng of people, on every Saturday, sing the litany of Loretto in so devout and impressive a manner that the privileged listener might well imagine that they belonged to the choirs of the angels.

In every country, in fine, and in every family where exists true devotion to Mary in pious hearts, some tribute of respect and love to her is paid by each person, either the hearing of a holy Mass, a pious communion, an alms, fasting or abstinence, or some other devotion.

There exists in many places, too, a charming custom, namely, that of lighting every Saturday, before the picture or statue of the Blessed Virgin, in private houses, or in some neighboring chapel, a lamp or candle, or several of them, and then, in the evening, meeting in company before this simple shrine to offer up together the holy Rosary.

It is impossible, Christian reader, to describe the

graces and blessings, the comfort and strength, that such a practice must necessarily draw down upon congregations and families, and on the hearts of all. You, too, Christian reader, should make the resolution to take upon yourself some such light and easy devotion every Saturday, or to persevere faithfully in what you have already begun, in order that the all-powerful Virgin may protect you in life and in death and lead you into a never-ending Sabbath rest.

INDULGENCED PRAYER.

Mother of God, most holy Mary, how often by my sins have I merited hell! Ere now the judgment had gone forth against my first mortal sin, hadst not thou, in thy tender pity, stayed a while God's justice, and then, softening my hard heart, drawn me on to take confidence in thee. And, oh! how often in dangers which beset my steps, had I fallen, hadst not thou, loving Mother that thou art, preserved me by the graces which thou didst obtain for me. My Queen, what will thy pity and thy favor have availed me, if I perish in the flames of hell? If ever I have not loved thee, now, after God, I love thee above all things. Ah! suffer not that I turn away from thee and from God, who through thee hath granted me so many mercies. Lady most worthy of all love, suffer not that I be doomed to hate and curse thee forever in hell. Couldst thou bear to see a servant whom thou lovest lost forever? O Mary, say not so. Say not that I shall be among the lost! yet lost am I assuredly, if I abandon thee. But who can have the heart to leave thee? How can I ever forget the love which thou hast borne me? No, it is impossible for him to perish who hath recourse to thee, and who, with loyal heart, confides in thee. Leave me

not to myself, my Mother, or I am lost! Let me ever have recourse to thee! Save me, my hope, save me from hell, and first from sin, which alone can cause my eternal ruin. ("Hail, holy Queen," etc., *three times.*)

CHAPTER XVI.

The Month of Mary.

How beautiful is springtime! How beautiful, Christian reader, is springtime in nature, springtime in the holy Church, springtime in your own heart! Where is the soul so dead to all feeling that, at the sight of awakening nature, in springtime, with all its freshness and beauty and new life, does not itself wake up in joy of spirit to praise the great Creator of all this loveliness? Where is the man who, in the bright and cheering days of May, does not rejoice in the returning foliage, in the sweet, fresh flowers? Who is not glad to see the violet in its shrinking modesty and the rose in its fragrant brightness?

In God's garden there is no sweeter violet, no fairer rose than that of which the poet sings,

> O Virgin, brighter than the brightest,
> 'Mid all the beauteous things that shine above;
> O Maiden, whiter than the whitest
> Of lily-flowers in Eden's sacred grove.

If, Christian reader, you are so situated as to be able to be present in your parish church when the Month of Mary devotions are publicly and solemnly performed, you enjoy a great blessing and possess a priceless grace, for which you ought to be deeply thankful to the Queen

of May, and for which you ought to show your gratitude by attending faithfully to these devotions. If you cannot attend church, then endeavor to utilize these fair days of early spring by following the devotions in private, before her image in the seclusion of your own home. Before showing how this may best be done, I shall endeavor to give you the origin and the meaning of this devotion of the Month of Mary.

I. ORIGIN OF THE MONTH OF MARY.

It cannot be definitely ascertained at what precise date this devotion assumed the form of a general and public veneration for the Queen of heaven. It is generally conceded that St. Philip Neri, a most devout servant of Mary, who died on the 26th of May, 1595, originated this beautiful and salutary practice. Truly we cannot deny that it must have been a providential arrangement for this devotion to be established at a time in which by means of the great religious movement and schism, miscalled the Reformation, great numbers of Christians were torn away from the true faith and consequently from the love of the Mother of God. It was by such beloved and grace-bringing devotion on the part of faithful Christians that some compensation was to be made to her for the loss of so many of her children. St. Philip Neri, who was a true friend of the young, saw with a troubled heart that many fair young blossoms of innocence, some of the most cherished children of the Church, were withered and destroyed by the vicious practices occurring during the May festivities in Italy. Who but the Mother of all the children in God's Church would be more likely, next to God, to defend and pre-

serve these tender plants of growing young men and maidens? Hence he not only recommended, every day, to the Blessed Virgin, these beloved souls, but he also induced the young people, all of whom knew him well and loved him dearly, to stay away from the riotous May festivities and to seek before the altars and the images of the Mother of God protection and happiness. At the mere suggestion of this fatherly friend, the young people who had thus far escaped from contamination hastened to the sanctuaries dedicated to Mary, there to pray, to sing holy canticles, to be instructed, to recite the Rosary, and thus to protect their souls from the poison of temptation. Tell me, Christian reader, whether the devotion of the Month of Mary does not owe its origin to a sublime and touching thought and sentiment?

Slowly and noiselessly, though continuously, this charming and blessed devotion, first taking its rise in Rome as its fountain head, overflowed the great heart of the universal Church, infusing new life into religion throughout all lands. Towards the end of the last century a special enthusiasm for the practice of this devotion seemed to animate all Catholic hearts. In a short space of time it produced in many localities a warmth of piety, which it also enkindled in many hearts that up to that time had been devoid of all love and of all regard for the sublime Queen of heaven. To-day the "Month of Mary" is firmly established all over the earth. In the great cities of Paris and London, as well as in the poorest and most obscure Indian missions of America, in the fisherman's cottage by the wild seaside, as well as in the proud palaces of kings, Mary is honored as the Queen of May. The simple child who, toddling by its mother's side, can hardly utter the "Hail, Mary," the gray-haired sire totter-

ing to his grave, holding in his feeble fingers his rosary as his last comfort and support, both honor Mary as the Queen of May.

2. THE OBSERVANCE OF MAY DEVOTIONS.

The manner of performing the devotion of the Month of Mary is different in different places, but the substance and the aim are the same. As this devotion took its rise in the capital of the Christian world, we will first cast a glance at the fervor and splendor of the Month of Mary exercises in that city. The early spring which prevails in that climate enables the faithful servants of Mary, even at the beginning of the month, to cover her altars with the choicest flowers, especially fragrant, full-blown roses. Rich and tasteful draperies surround the shrine of the Madonna, which, from the floor to the ceiling of the chapel, blazes with hundreds of wax tapers.

The exercises begin with the recitation of the Rosary, after which a discourse is delivered on some one of the many virtues or prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin, and is usually given by the same priest every day. After the sermon the preacher proposes to the crowded congregation of worshippers some virtue to be practised on the following day, usually some act of mortification. Then he reads the history of some example bearing on devotion to Mary, and gives out some aspiration to be repeated often during the ensuing twenty-four hours. Then some "Hail, Marys" are repeated for the conversion of obstinate sinners and of heretics. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is then given by some priest or perhaps a prelate. The children of the parish, or a singing society, if there is one or a few chosen persons, then sing the litany of Loretto,

and the assembled worshippers respond "Pray for us," to each ejaculation; the "Tantum Ergo" follows, and then the Blessed Sacrament is raised aloft in benediction. The service closes with the "Laudate Pueri," or with some suitable hymn.

CHAPTER XVII.

Advent Time.

1. JOY AND GRATITUDE.

The ecclesiastical year of the Church begins with the holy season of Advent, about four weeks before Christmas. For every faithful child of the Church it ought to be a matter of joy and thanksgiving that with the opening of this new year of the Church begins also a season of special devotion to the Queen of heaven.

The word Advent means "the coming" and has reference to the coming of Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer, through the intervention of Mary, the Virgin Mother.

During these four weeks of Advent the Church goes back in spirit to the four thousand years which preceded the real and veritable coming of Christ to the earth, by virtue of the mystery of the Incarnation. During that long and gloomy period of time the world sighed, yearned and hoped for the Messias. The Lord had said solemnly to the serpent-tempter in the garden, "I will put enmities between thee and the woman . . . she shall crush thy head" (Genesis iii. 15). From the time those words were uttered poor, fallen, helpless man ceased not to long for the coming of that Virgin who was to conceive and bring forth the Son who was to be called Emmanuel—"God with us." Thus Advent is not only a season devoted to

the Son of God made man, but also to His highly favored Mother.

Christian reader, if you would observe every year the holy time of Advent in union with your holy Church, then you should pass those solemn days in rejoicing that Mary was chosen for the high dignity of Mother of God, and also in giving thanks because she accepted that sublime dignity. As a means of giving outward practical expression to such joy and such thanks, I would suggest to you the beautiful devotion of the Angelus, and would recommend you to perform it with unwonted fervor at sunrise, noon, and sunset.

2. THE "RORATE," OR "MASS OF THE FALLING DEW."

The sentiments animating the soul of every believing Christian during the holy time of Advent, may find expression in the beautiful words of the prophet Isaias, "Drop down dew (rorate), ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth bud forth a Saviour" (Isaias xlv. 8). These inspired words of the prophet, so expressive of his longing for the Redeemer, form the Introit of a votive Mass to the Blessed Virgin, which the rubrics of the Church recommend every priest to celebrate during Advent time.

In many countries it is the custom to celebrate this votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin, beginning with the words "Rorate," etc., or "Rain down dew," etc., two or three times every week, with great pomp and solemnity. It is known as the "Rorate" Mass. Sometimes, too, it is called the Angel Mass, because the gospel sung in it relates the history of the angel's message to Mary when he announced to her the great mystery of the Incarnation.

On such occasions true Catholic sentiment and a genuine love for Mary are heightened by all the surrounding circumstances. The " Rorate " Mass is usually celebrated in the earliest hour of the day. The darkness of the waning night still broods over nature, outside the Church, and is a fitting symbol of the darkness and misery, of the poverty of faith and charity, in which unredeemed mankind were buried before the coming of Christ. Within the sacred edifice the altar of the Blessed Virgin is all ablaze with lights, and her image stands forth amid a very sea of brightness and beauty, to remind the worshippers of the fulness of grace that deluged the immaculate soul of the Mother of God, and also the light of faith and of grace that was shed upon the world by her divine Son.

Certainly, Christian reader, you will not grudge to deprive yourself of one hour's unnecessary sleep in the morning in order to participate in the benefits and blessings of the " Rorate " Mass whenever it is celebrated in your parish church. If circumstances forbid such service, then be only the more eager to assist at the ordinary daily Mass, for it is not the number of lights, nor the grand chant of the singers, that give value to the Mass. It is Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. He is the Light of the world ; He it is who offers Himself to the Eternal Father for your salvation, even if there are but two candles burning on the altar and the perpetual light before the tabernacle.

3. ADVENT TIME IN ROME.

The holy season of Advent is kept in Rome with mingled seriousness and cheerfulness.

At the wish and instigation of the Archconfraternity of

a Happy Death, there was established at Rome, in the year 1560, the profoundly earnest and touching custom of the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the course of the ecclesiastical year. This beautiful devotion still continues to flourish.

On the first Sunday of Advent our Holy Father, the Pope, after celebrating pontifical Mass in the Sixtine chapel in the Vatican, exposes the Blessed Sacrament in the Pauline chapel. It remains there, surrounded by crowds of pious worshippers, till the following Tuesday morning. Then the cardinal-vicar of the diocese, about the same hour that the devotion closes at the Pauline chapel, exposes solemnly the Blessed Sacrament at the Church of St. John Lateran. When the forty hours expire, the same ceremony is renewed in another church, and again successively at every other parish church in the city. When this devotion of the "Forty Hours' Adoration" has been gone through in every church, the ecclesiastical year has expired. Then, on the first Sunday of Advent, our blessed Lord resumes, as it were, His pilgrimage of salvation to men, by appearing again in solemn exposition on the altar where the devotion started. Thus, in Rome, it is a continuous advent of Jesus Christ, who comes veiled under the sacramental species, now to one congregation, then to another. Thus the Redeemer Himself, in union with the devout Catholic inhabitants of the Eternal City, keeps perpetual advent. Truly the people of Rome enjoy ample facilities and uninterrupted opportunities to welcome the advent of "The Desired of Nations" and to congratulate the blessed Mother that her divine Son, to-day, as of old in Judea, is going about "doing good."

Among the many beautiful devotions of Advent time

in Rome, the following is peculiarly touching and attractive: From time immemorial its streets have resounded with the simple music of the so-called Pipers. These rustic musicians are shepherds from the Abruzzi and Sabine mountains, who, in fulfilment of a simple promise to do what they can to contribute to the honor of the Blessed Virgin and to the glory of her incarnate Son, come down from their mountain homes, every year just before Advent, and make their appearance in the streets of the city early in the morning of the first Sunday of Advent. Every day from that time till Christmas eve they may be seen and heard in the public streets of the city, standing before some statue or image of the Blessed Virgin and discoursing on their rude pipes plain rustic music in honor of the Mother of God, the chief import of which is that the coming of the Saviour is again at hand. They form a pretty picture as, clad in their quaint mountain costumes, and with heads respectfully uncovered, they stand in groups, usually of three persons—a gray-haired sire, a man in middle life and a little boy, and pipe forth their simple melodies before a wayside Madonna. Neither the cold and piercing blasts of winter nor the heavy rains of the season can deter these hardy mountaineers from their loving occupation. Rome is pleased when the pipers come to announce the arrival of the Advent season. For the inhabitants look with kind affection on anything that reminds them of the beloved patroness. There are in Rome so many outdoor images of Mary, and the little bands of rustic pipers are so numerous, that one can hardly walk a block through the city, or rest an hour at his window, without being reminded by the cheerful strains of the pipers' instruments of the approaching commemoration of the mys-

terious birth of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Thus these simple peasants retain to this day the privilege of being the first to proclaim the birth of the Saviour, as did their prototypes, the shepherds of the plains of Bethlehem. The song which these devout men sing before the statues of the Blessed Virgin, may be thus rendered in English—

In Bethlehem, when the Christ was born,
Shone the midnight like the morn;
Such bright gleaming,
Midday seeming,
Streamed from every burning star.
And the Wise Men, called afar,
Came from lands that see the dawn.

Nature knew no poisoned fang;
Hymns of peace the whole earth sang.
Lambs safe feeding,
Never heeding
Lions in their pastures laid,
While the young kids frisked and played
With the leopards as they sprang.

Bears in shaggy coats of brown,
With the soft-eyed calves lay down;
Lambkins sleeping,
In the keeping
Of the gray wolves, swift and wise;
While the old sheep turned their eyes
Towards the shepherds' wond'ring frown.

But an angel, clad in light,
Brighter than the sun is bright,
Stood before them,
Bending o'er them,
Said, "Rejoice, be not afraid;
Laugh, for earth once more is made
Paradise, for man's delight."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Christmas.

What a thrill of delight is awakened in every sincere Christian heart even at the sound of the word Christmas. How we are charmed at the mere remembrance of the many grace-laden events clustering around this feast. The story of Mary's and Joseph's journey over the weary road to Bethlehem, the refusal at the doors of the inn, the rude picture of the stable, the mysterious birth of Jesus, the adoration of the shepherds, the three kings and their wonderful star, the circumcision, the flight into Egypt, the frequent visits of the angels with their friendly greetings, and their warning messages, all these things are well calculated to lift up the believing soul, to encourage it, and to bring it nearer to God in love and confidence.

Now, then, from each one of these beautiful pictures take away the Blessed Virgin and the whole charm is lost. Yes, indeed, for Mary, next to Jesus, is the life and light and central figure and point of all our Christmas mysteries. She it is who gives us Our Saviour, she nestles Him in the manger, she cherishes and warms Him on her motherly breast. She receives the worshipping shepherds and the adoring Wise Men, and in the name of the divine Infant accepts their gifts and returns His thanks. She appears throughout as the undisputed mediatrix between man and God, her Son.

Our holy Church, too, honors the Blessed Virgin in a special manner in her Christmas solemnities. In praise and thanksgiving to her she directs her choirs to sing, in joyful, heart-felt tones, the beautiful hymn, "Alma Redemptoris Mater"—

> Mother of Christ! hear thou thy people's cry,
> Star of the deep and portal of the sky!
> Mother of Him who thee from nothing made,
> Sinking we strive and call to thee for aid:
> Oh, by that joy which Gabriel brought to thee,
> Thou Virgin first and last, let us thy mercy see!

Dear Christian reader, if you would respond to the wishes of your beloved Church and follow the natural impulse of your own heart by celebrating each year the sacred festival of Christmas in a proper spirit and with profit to your own immortal soul, then you should not fail to honor the Mother of God in the manner prescribed, and to humbly offer, to her beloved Son through her motherly hands, every proof of your gratitude and homage.

1. In the first place awaken in your heart an act of the profoundest sympathy for the sublime Queen of heaven and her patient spouse, St. Joseph, in their toilsome journey towards Bethlehem, in their sad disappointment in encountering the hard-hearted people of Bethlehem who shut their doors in their faces, and also in what they suffered from cold, poverty, and neglect in the stable.

2. Then should follow an act or expression of longing for the Redeemer, for His pardon and for other favors, or, better yet, unite your longing with the longing of the holy Mother for her expected Son and Saviour.

3. Then in profound and grateful adoration prostrate yourself before the manger in order to render homage to your divine Saviour and King, in company of the ever

blessed Mother, St. Joseph and the lowly, simple shepherds.

4. From the depths of your heart teeming with happiness, express outwardly to your blessed Mother your inward sentiments of reverence, gratitude, and respectful love.

5. In order to prove these inward sentiments of your heart, endeavor to assist on Christmas day at as many Masses as you can, and also approach the Holy Sacrament of the altar with the proper dispositions.

6. Do not forget to carry offerings to the crib of Bethlehem and to lay them in the kind motherly hand of Mary, to be applied for the relief of the poor, or to assist some struggling church or some other missionary work.

7. But the best and most effective way of manifesting your love and reverence for Mary, and that which is most pleasing to herself, is to show yourself a worthy child of hers by practising all those virtues which her divine Son preached from the manger, the mount, and the cross, namely, the virtues of purity, obedience, humility; and love of poverty. With this intention, repeat often the following efficacious indulgenced prayer:

O Jesus, living in Mary, come and live in Thy servants in the spirit of Thy holiness, in the fulness of Thy might, in the truth of Thy virtues, in the perfection of Thy ways, in the communion of Thy mysteries; subdue every hostile power, in Thy spirit, for the glory of the Father. Amen.*

* Indulgence of 300 days granted by Pius IX., October 14, 1859.

PART III.

How the Blessed Virgin is Honored in Church Devotions.

CHAPTER I.

The Litany of Loretto.—Processions.

I. THE LITANY OF LORETTO.

NEXT to the devotion of the holy Rosary, the devotion most tender and most beloved among Catholic people is the recital or the chanting of litanies.

A chanter, or perhaps the regular choir, pronounces the invocation aloud, while the body of the people in attendance support the chant with one voice and one heart, and respond vigorously and earnestly, "Have mercy on us," or "Pray for us." Experience has proved that in response to prayers thus offered Our Lord has always kept His promise: "I say to you that if two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19).

Such mode of effective prayer to the Blessed Virgin has been in constant practise in the Catholic Church

from time immemorial and has always been attended with the most salutary results. This prayer of mingled praise and petition is called the litany of Loretto because it is solemnly chanted every Saturday in the holy house at Loretto. The author of the litany and the time of its origin are unknown. It is certain, however, that it was in use among Catholics before the fourteenth century. The burden of this litany consists of a series of titles, figures and symbols, all indicating and expressing the dignity, beauty, power, and other admirable characteristics, of the Blessed Virgin. A form of praise-prayer such as this one is, would have its origin only in some devout heart deeply influenced by the Holy Spirit. As we read and pronounce the tender and chaste language of the several invocations, how nobly and beautifully, yet gently and lovingly, the blessed Mother of God rises before the eyes of our souls, whether we consider her life on earth, her glory in heaven, or her honored position in the bosom of the Catholic Church.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that persons hostile to the devotion shown by Catholics to Mary, persons all too solicitous about the adoration due to God, should, in their fastidiousness and self-supposed learning, have found fault with some of the expressions of this litany and endeavored to turn them into arguments against such devotion. To the vain and puny attacks of such fault-finders the Catholic Church would give the following reply: In the year 1664 Pope Alexander V. forbade any addition, no matter how orthodox and beautiful, to be made to the then existing form of the litany of Loretto. It was to be rigidly maintained in ancient form, except that the members belonging to the Rosary Society were permitted to add at the end of the invocations, "Queen

of the holy Rosary! pray for us." Again, in 1854, after the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Congregation of Rites, at Rome, granted a limited or qualified permission to the faithful to subjoin at the end of the litany, "Queen conceived without original sin! Pray for us." Yet this was only a privilege. No one is bound to say these words. Their omission does not imperil the indulgences attached to the litany. From these cautious measures of the Church it may be seen with what careful solicitude she watches over, and hedges in against extravagance, not only the faith and morals of her children, but even the liturgy and private devotions.

Surely, dearest reader, you belong to the number of those faithful children of Mary who thus frequently and piously salute the sovereign Queen of heaven and earth, both in the quiet seclusion of their pious homes and at the public religious devotions in the church or chapel.

2. PROCESSIONS IN HONOR OF MARY.

The word litany comes from the Greek language and means in its literal sense, "a prayer-march." Indeed the various Church litanies seem never more appropriate, pleasing and edifying than when recited or chanted during religious processions.

Our religious processions, as now conducted and practised in the Church, are simply and really short pilgrimages. They are grounded equally on the nature of man and in the nature of Church worship.

The holy and learned Church Fathers, among them notably SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, and Ambrose, speak of these religious devotions as in practise away back among the early Christians. They used to be observed on a variety of occasions, but especially at the graves of the

martyrs, and at the translation of relics to the different churches litanies were always chanted with great devotion.

Such devotional processions in honor of the Blessed Virgin were also practised in times of great need, in famines, epidemics, floods, droughts, and other calamities. The renowned Church historian, Baronius, informs us that Pope Gregory I., as early as the year 590, gave orders that an image of the Blessed Virgin should be carried in such processions.

As the different Confraternities were formed in honor of the Blessed Virgin, they established and carried out with great solemnity a regular series of religious processions in order, first, to encourage devotion on the various festival days, and, still more, in order to give public sanction and expression and encouragement to devotion for the Blessed Virgin.

In all those parishes where the society of the living Rosary was introduced, it soon became a regular custom to hold a procession once every month, in performing which the processionists used to carry banners of the three colors, white in honor of the joyful mysteries, red in honor of the sorrowful mysteries, and gold in honor of the glorious mysteries of the Rosary. In many places, too, a fine statue of the Madonna, holding a rosary in her hand, was borne aloft, with great reverence, by young girls in some of these processions. As a further sign of the respect and love due to the virginal Mother, these young girls were arrayed in pure white garments, with wreaths of white flowers on their heads.

On some of the greater festivals of these confraternities a still more solemn character was added to the procession, and a still greater honor was rendered to the blessed Mother by having the company of her own divine Son in

the procession. Yes, Jesus Christ was personally present. For the priest of the parish placed the consecrated Host in the ostensorium and carried it through the line of march.

Thus did the Saviour Himself, by His own divine presence, give His sanction to this form of devotion. By the solemn reverential feeling produced among Catholics by that presence, much was added to the deep piety and impressiveness of the procession, for Jesus Christ Himself honored and glorified His blessed Mother. It also afforded to the pious processionists an opportunity of rendering homage to the divine Son while they honored the Mother who bore Him. Indeed it became a strong rebuke to those who say that Catholics, when they honor Mary, forget Jesus and give to a creature the homage due to the Creator.

If, therefore, dearest reader, our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in order to honor His beloved Mother consented to leave even the sacred retirement of the tabernacle and permitted Himself to be carried in human hands, with deep solemnity, through the highways and byways of the world, and went joyfully and gladly about doing good, may not you, too, and myself as well, feel justified and pleased and happy to offer to our blessed Mother a similar testimony of love and respect by marching in these religious processions?

It would, indeed, be a bad sign for any Christian young woman to be held back from such public devotions through fears of human respect. How silly and inconsistent to be ashamed to appear in plain white garments and to do honor to her guardian Mother and yet to array herself in her best adornments of person in order to please others, or perhaps to cause the envy of her own sex, and to attract the admiring eyes of men!

CHAPTER II.

The Angelus.

THERE are few churches or chapels, especially in the older countries of Europe, so poor as not to be able to have some kind of a bell to toll forth three times, each day, to the surrounding country the praise of the immaculate Mother of God. Where is the Catholic Christian whose soul does not respond with joy to the pulsations of the Angelus bell as it reminds him of the Incarnation, at morning, noon, and night?*

At the first few strokes of the bell the well-known words are devoutly pronounced, "The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Ghost." At the second sound of the bell is said in like manner, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to Thy word;" and at the third stroke, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," adding one "Hail, Mary" each time. The exact time when this devotion took this special form and came into general use cannot be definitely ascertained. A synod held in the city of Prague, in the year 1605, declares this devotion "to have been a very ancient custom."

* See the chapter on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, for an account of the origin and spread of this devotion of the Angelus.

It is not absolutely necessary to the gaining of the indulgence to add to the Angelus the versicle, "Pray for us, O holy Mother of God," though it is usually added and is very commendable. The response to the last versicle is "That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ."

At the end, while the bell tolls slowly, the pious Christian recites the following

PRAYER.

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and cross, be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

I. PROFOUND MEANING OF THE ANGELUS.

Christian reader, by practising this beautiful and useful devotion you are reminded three times each day that the divine Word became man to redeem you and all your fellow-men from the slavery of sin. Three times, too, you are reminded of the Blessed Virgin's motherly dignity, motherly love, and motherly self-sacrifice. The devotion enables Christians to begin and to close the day with the name of Mary. She bids us enter on the duties of the day with courage and hope, and at evening bids us take our well-earned rest with an easy conscience. She points forward and upward to the heavenly rewards of our labors here below, and thus affords us strength and courage to bear the burdens and the heats of the high noontide.

What can be more beautiful than the voice of the

Angelus bell as it floats away in the fresh, fragrant morning air, mingling its tones with the sweet songs of a thousand birds? It seems to meet the rising sun, as every heart should go forth to meet the Rising Sun of Justice on Easter morn. It calls the workman to his daily toil and bids him go forth on another day of life's journey, repeating the name of Mary. Mary is our guiding Star of morning. Turn your eyes towards her, O my soul, that she may guide thee, protect thee, encourage thee, and guard thee through the long day of earthly life.

It is noontime, the consecrated bell once more invites us to rest from labor and to seek refreshment of body and soul in pious prayer to the Mother of mercy. The midday sun now pours down upon our heads light and warmth in fullest measure. In a similar way does Mary, who is the sun of grace, sail over our souls, dispensing, with a lavish hand, grace and love, forgiveness of sin, and confidence in God.

And when the last faint rays of departing day prepare to leave us, when the quiet evening fades into the dark and mysterious night, when the bright evening star beams from the firmament, the evening Angelus bell seems to bring forth into the firmament of renewed faith, Mary, our brightest and best evening star of peace and grace. We pray to her for her blessed protection, not only at the close of the fleeting day, but also at the close of our life just as fleeting. Pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

This devotion of the Angelus repeated three times a day, makes our otherwise sinful world like unto the heavenly Jerusalem, where the praises offered to the heavenly Queen, mingled with the adoration offered to

her divine Son, issue without interruption from the intellects of the angels and saints, and resound without ceasing through the boundless vaults of heaven.

Another feature of this tri-daily devotion of the Angelus is this: As the earth revolves on its axis, presenting to the sun its whole surface successively, thus forming day and night in different places at different times, it will be easily seen that it is always morning, noon and sunset in some portion of the globe. Thus it comes to pass that day and night an uninterrupted hymn of praise and prayer is offered to God and His blessed Mother through the devotion of the Angelus. The Angelus bell never ceases to remind its hearers of the great benefit of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, awakening in millions of hearts sentiments of the deepest gratitude to Jesus, their Saviour, and to Mary, His Mother.

With a view of diffusing the devotion of the Angelus widely among the faithful, thus to reward and encourage piety, our holy Mother, the Church, has enriched it with indulgences. One, of a hundred days, is granted to all persons who, at the ringing of the Angelus bell, at morning, noon, and night, repeat the prescribed prayers with a humble and contrite heart. Such persons should kneel at each performance, except from Saturday evening till Sunday evening, both inclusive, when they may stand. A plenary indulgence may be obtained by all persons who, during the month, have recited the Angelus at least once a day, and who, at the end of that time, confess their sins and receive holy communion, praying for the intention of our Holy Father, the Pope (Benedict XIII., Sept. 14, 1724). During the Paschal season the faithful, instead of the Angelus, recite, standing, the hymn,

"Regina cœli lætare," "Queen of heaven rejoice," etc. Those, however, who do not know this hymn, may recite the ordinary form of the Angelus. Those of the faithful who live in places where the sound of the Angelus bell cannot be heard, may gain the indulgences by saying the usual Angelus prayers about the time that the bells ring in their longitude, paying due attention to the difference of the season, and the hours of sunrise and sunset (Pius VI., March 18, 1781).

Christian reader, you have doubtless met with cowardly persons who had not, in the presence of others, the courage to uncover their heads, and to interrupt for a few minutes their conversation or occupation, to salute the sublime Mother of God with a devout "Hail, Mary." Once upon a time, at the first sound of the Angelus bell, all conversation would cease, all work would be interrupted, all amusement would be suspended, and all would pray aloud. Will you join the cowards or the pious worshippers? If you have not the courage to salute publicly Mary as your Mother, how can you hope that she will prove herself to be your Mother in life or at the hour of death?

The following poem, entitled "Ave Maria Bells," by Charles Warren Stoddard, appeared in the *Ave Maria;*

At dawn the joyful choir of bells,
In consecrated citadels,
Flings on the sweet and drowsy air
A brief, melodious call to prayer.
For Mary, Virgin meek and lowly,
Conceived of the Spirit Holy,
As the Lord's angel did declare.

At noon, above the fretful street,
Our souls are lifted to repeat

The prayer, with low and wistful voice,
"According to Thy word and choice,
Though sorrowful and heavy-laden,
So be it done to Thy handmaiden."
Then all the sacred bells rejoice.

At eve with roses in the west,
The daylight's withering bequest,
Ring prayerful bells while blossom bright
The stars, the lilies of the night.
Of all the songs the years have sung us,
"The Word made flesh has dwelt among us"
Is still our ever new delight.

2. THE BELL OF THE "DE PROFUNDIS."

A devout son of the Blessed Virgin, St. Cajetan of Thiena, who was born in the year 1480, and who while yet a child, was so ardently devoted to the Blessed Virgin as to be called by his companions "Saint Cajetan," had long desired to have the benefits of the Angelus bell applied to the suffering souls in purgatory. This holy founder of the Clerks Regulars, or Theatines, about the year 1546 introduced into the city of Naples a pious custom of ringing the church bells every evening, some time after sunset, and of inciting the people to recite the 129th Psalm of David, known from its opening words as the "De Profundis." His object was to aid the souls in purgatory by having the faithful send up a united prayer to God and the Blessed Virgin, with that intention. This devotion has ever since been known as the "Ave" of the "De Profundis." The Synod of Salzburg, in the year 1616, introduced this tender devotion into Germany. The Synod of Cologne, in the year 1627, gave orders that the signal-call for this devotion, in behalf of the souls in purgatory, should be made by a ringing of the bell, alto-

gether distinct from the Angelus. The devotion spread gradually from country to country throughout Christendom. Every evening, some time after the Angelus bell ceases to shed its music on the twilight air, another smaller and softer bell is heard to toll out the invitation and exhortation, "Pray for the dead," "De Profundis clamavi."

CHAPTER III.

The "Salve, Regina," or "Hail, Holy Queen."

CHRISTIAN reader, have you ever given due attention to the words and thoughts contained in the favorite prayer of praise, "Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy"? Have you ever heard it chanted, or even recited, in the great cathedral at Spire, or in the miracle-chapel at Einsiedeln? If you have, then you must have heard tones and expressions that raised your heart to the throne of Mary in heaven.

Every good Catholic knows the words of this favorite and time-honored prayer which, in English, reads as follows:

THE "SALVE, REGINA."

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope; to thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this, our exile, is ended, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus; O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

1. THE AUTHOR OF THE "SALVE, REGINA."

The author of this beautiful anthem to the Blessed

Virgin was Blessed Herman the Cripple, or Contractus. He was the son of Count Wolfrad II. of Veringen and his worthy wife, Hiltrude. He was born in the year 1009. Under the careful guidance of his pious mother the boy Herman grew in innocence and piety. All promised well until he was attacked in his sixth year by a severe fit of illness which stunted his growth and contracted his limbs in such a manner that he was compelled to use crutches from that time till the day of his death. Hence came his name, Herman Contractus, or Herman the Cripple. Although his sufferings were intense nearly all the time, and although his body ceased to develop, his keenly active soul became more closely united to God, and its powers grew and strengthened under this heavy cross of bodily affliction. His great love and sincere devotion for the "Mother of the afflicted" secured him peace of soul and even lightened his bodily sufferings. We are told however, that he continued to pray to his beloved Mother for restoration to health and strength, if it should be pleasing to God. Pious legend informs us that when he had prayed thus for some months, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and offered him the choice between two gifts; namely, health or wisdom. Herman, without hesitating a moment, chose the gift of wisdom. He made a wise selection, for notwithstanding his bodily infirmities he became one of the most learned men of his time. Under the poor form of a deformed body there dwelt a noble soul, a clear and richly gifted intellect, and a humble and charitable heart.

Herman, resolving to leave the world in order to devote himself to the service of God and the acquisition of wisdom and learning, entered the Order of St. Benedict. He lived for some time in the renowned monastery of St.

Gall in Switzerland, and afterward in a no less famous seat of piety and learning, the monastery of Reichenau, situated on a beautiful island in Lake Zurich, near Constance.

Although this crippled and deformed monk never passed a day without intense suffering of body, he labored cheerfully and assiduously in acquiring spiritual perfection and also in laying up stores of useful knowledge for the benefit of his fellow-men then living and yet to be born. From the whole Catholic world, and from the friends and servants of Mary in particular, he deserves sincere thanks for having given to the Church the beautiful hymn of the "Salve, Regina," or "Hail, holy Queen."

Christian reader, now that you know the author of this invocation to Mary, you will be more interested in it and appreciate it more thoroughly than you ever did before. Who could speak with more effect of "this valley of tears" than the poor crippled monk? Who realized more fully the miseries of this exile on earth? Well might he cry out to his blessed Mother, "After this, our exile, is ended, show unto us Jesus." Thus you perceive that the "Salve, Regina" is the outpouring of a soul wholly devoted to Mary and relying on her motherly assistance.

Herman, in his forty-fifth year, died as he had lived, breathing tender affection for Jesus and Mary. Although his bodily pains became more intense as death approached, he bore all without a murmur, and peacefully expired on the 24th of September, 1054. He is ranked among the saints belonging to the Benedictine Order.

2. THE "SALVE, REGINA" RECEIVES AN ADDITION.

In the year 1146 St. Bernard, the illustrious doctor of

the Church and abbot of Clairvaux, was travelling through Germany and by the power of his eloquence was rousing the people of that country to the necessity of entering upon another crusade, a spirited one, in order to wrest from the iron grasp of the heathens those places in Palestine that had been sanctified by the footsteps, and moistened with the blood, of our holy Redeemer.

Passing from Switzerland, by way of Strasbourg, St. Bernard sailed down the river Rhine and landed at Spire, on Christmas eve, 1146. In a grand procession, composed of the civic societies and trades unions, with their banners waving in the air, and holding lighted tapers in their hands, followed in turn by the clergy with their bishop clad in pontifical robes, St. Bernard was conducted, amid every sign of respect from the multitudes who lined the streets of the city, to the majestic cathedral. Here, amid the chant of the choristers and the joyful pealing of the bells, the great preacher of the holy wars was met by the Emperor Conrad and all the royal princes of the court, who tendered to their illustrious guest the welcome of their realm. It was a scene of great magnificence as the saint crossed the threshold of the sacred edifice. Thousands had to remain outside the building, for the saint's great reputation for sanctity and the fame of the wondrous miracles that he had wrought, as well as his renowned eloquence, had drawn vast crowds from far and near, eager to get a glimpse of his venerable person.

As the solemn procession, preceded by the cross and other standards, marched slowly up the grand aisle of the cathedral, a choir of a thousand voices chanted the hymn, "Salve, Regina," or "Hail, holy Queen." The lofty vaults of the sacred edifice spanning many altars ablaze with a thousand lights, the soldierly form of the

emperor, the venerable mien of the holy bishops, the long files of white-robed priests, the vast crowds of admiring people, the inspiring strains of the music, and all this but the expression of truly Catholic hearts, overpowered the soul of St. Bernard with emotions of intense gratitude to God and His blessed Mother. The altar was reached as the singers' voices repeated the last words of the "Salve, Regina." A profound silence ensued as the words, "Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende"—that is, "Show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus," died away. In a moment of inspiration, and overwhelmed with the loftiest sentiments of piety towards the Blessed Virgin, the great St. Bernard, in thrilling tones, exclaimed spontaneously, "*O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria!*" that is, "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!"

From that moment the "Salve, Regina" continued to have a new ending. The love-breathing words of St. Bernard, the honey-tongued doctor, as holy Church styles him, were universally adopted, and added, with a will by all, to the "Salve, Regina" originally composed by Blessed Herman the Cripple. They form a beautiful and fitting ending to a beautiful apostrophe to the Mother of God. In the cathedral at Spire, every day, from that time till our day, the "Salve, Regina" is sung solemnly in memory of the events so sacred which led to the inspired composition of its present ending and in memory of the saint who uttered the beautiful words.

3. THE "SALVE, REGINA" BELOVED BY THE CHURCH AND HER SAINTS.

This hymn of Blessed Herman has been so far honored in the Church as to be formally inserted in her daily

public and private services. Every priest is obliged to recite it, at the end of the Divine Office, every day from Trinity Sunday till the beginning of Advent. In those churches where the Divine Office is chanted in choir solemnly, this antiphon is sung every evening with all the solemnity that the ceremonial and music of the Church can give it.

Towards the end of the last century the powers of hell, aided by the mischievous efforts of the infidels, strove hard in many countries, notably in France and Germany, to bury out of sight all external, and, indeed, internal, respect and devotion to the Mother of God and to the other saints of the Church.

In order to defeat these unholy efforts many devout persons among the laity, several of whom were persons of high and respectable standing, formed themselves into societies for the defence of devotion to Mary and other saints, to make reparation for the indignities offered to her and to implore her aid in their own behalf. They agreed among themselves to recite, at least once every morning, the hymn, "Salve, Regina," adding to it the versicle:

"Make me worthy to praise thee, holy Virgin; give me strength against thine enemies; blessed be God in His saints. Amen."

In the evening they repeated devoutly the short but beautiful prayer, "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin." Then followed the versicle, "Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ."

The Sovereign Pontiff not only gave his approval to

this simple and edifying mode of doing honor to the Blessed Virgin, but also was pleased to enrich it with indulgences.

You will not wonder, therefore, dear Christian reader, that God's favorite saints loved to recite and sing this anthem of the "Hail, holy Queen" with joyful hearts, receiving in compensation abundant graces in their devout souls. It will also be to your spiritual advantage if you recite it often and piously. When doing so remember the words of St. Bernard, "By a saint was this hymn of supplication composed, by other saints it was introduced into the every-day devotions of the faithful; therefore it can be used properly only by saints or those who wish to become such. For, in very truth, it can be fully understood and appreciated, and sung with edification, only by those who are animated with purely religious sentiments of heart and soul. It is so sweet and tender in its suggestions to the ways of grace, so fruitful in begetting holy emotions, so profoundly explanatory of holy mysteries, that it can never be meditated on and studied out by us as it deserves. When its tender strains and its pathetic words strike our ear, it acts most forcibly on all our best feelings; it enriches our souls with its own fulness of beauty and virtue and carries us so far heavenward towards our blessed Lady that we seem to stand before her, saluting her face to face."

CHAPTER IV.

The "Memorare," or "Remember."

Among the standard canticles used by the faithful in praise of Mary, the "Salve, Regina," or "Hail, holy Queen," is the most tender and love-breathing. But the one prayer that inspires and expresses most confidence, and bids us hope for certain hearing, is the prayer, "Memorare," beginning with the words, "Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary," etc. Who does not know this prayer? Who has not said it in his hour of need and affliction? It is as follows:

"MEMORARE."

Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother! To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate! despise not my petitions, but, in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

What boundless hope, what a wealth of affection for Mary, must have dwelt in the soul of the man who was able to give such utterance to his sentiments of confidence and love! This beautiful prayer has been ascribed

to St. Bernard, the great doctor of the Church, and it is truly worthy of his enthusiastic, deep-seated, genuine veneration for the Queen of heaven. But this generally received opinion lacks the necessary authority. It is far more probable that it was composed by another devout servant of Mary, also called Bernard, but whose full name is Claudius Bernard, and who is universally venerated under the fond and endearing title of "the poor priest." This pious man was born in the year 1588, at Dijon in France, of respectable family. At an early age he renounced the world and all its enticements and devoted himself exclusively to the service of the poor, and, more especially, to criminals condemned to death. The great Cardinal Richelieu urged him in vain to accept some honorable and lucrative position. When he was pressed to ask at least for some favor for himself, this humble priest made the following reply: "Then I would beg your Eminence to have some stronger planks placed in the bottom of the cart in which I ride with the condemned criminals when going to the place of execution, so that the constant fear of falling through to the pavement may not hinder any penitents from praying to God with recollection and attention."

Father Bernard constantly visited the prisons in Paris, endeavoring to inspire their inmates with sentiments of resignation, penitence and Christian hope. At the end of his exhortations he would invite his hearers to join him in singing the "Salve, Regina." He was particularly zealous in promoting the recital of the celebrated prayer, "Memorare," or "Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary." He caused it to be translated into various languages and distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of this excellent prayer, by means of which he effected innumerable conversions. One day he accompanied to

the scaffold a hardened culprit who even then ceased not to blaspheme. The good priest followed him to the block and made an effort to embrace him. The other pushed him back so violently as to throw him down. Although much hurt by the fall, Bernard rose and falling on his knees began his favorite prayer, "Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary." The hitherto impenitent culprit burst into tears and gave every sign of sincere repentance.

On another occasion Father Bernard visited a prisoner under sentence of death, who refused to approach the Sacrament of Penance. He saluted the unhappy man, exhorted him to hope in God, and menaced him with the divine judgment in case he continued obstinate. The culprit remained unmoved. The priest begged him to recite at least one short prayer to Mary. He refused. Then Father Bernard himself began his favorite prayer, "Remember," etc., in the hope that the prisoner would join him, but the unhappy man remained silent. Not dismayed by his want of success, the holy man persisted in his efforts and at length triumphed over the obstinacy of the object of so much zeal. Scarcely were the first words again pronounced, "Remember," etc., when the other burst into tears and manifested the deepest compunction.

To-day the admirable prayer is uttered by the lips of millions of Catholics who find themselves standing in need of the help of Mary for body or soul. The innocent utter it to secure the dearest treasure of the soul on earth, holy purity, from sensual contamination. The sinner utters it, begging from the Mother of sinners that she would be to him a guiding, saving star of hope at the hour of his death, to enlighten his benighted soul. The penitent utters it to obtain relief from the gnawing worm

of remorse in his conscience. The anxious father of a family, and the mother solicitous for her children, utter it together in order to obtain from Mary's motherly heart innocence for their children. The dying Christian utters it in order to obtain her assistance in the dread hour of death.

Our holy Mother, the Church, sets a high value on this prayer. To all of her children who recite it with proper dispositions, she grants many indulgences, namely, three hundred days at each recital and a plenary indulgence once a month to all those who observe the pious custom of saying it at least once every day and of receiving communion once a month with that intention.*

Christian reader, do you not feel the necessity of saying this prayer? Do you not feel and believe that it will strengthen you and help you in the great work of saving your immortal soul?

* Pius IX., December 11, 1846.

CHAPTER V.

The Holy Rosary.

High up in the Alps there once dwelt a family of shepherds. The oldest daughter of this family, though but thirteen years of age, was compelled, in order to enable the parents to live, to ascend day after day still higher in the mountains in search of pasture for her little flock of sheep. Under a hanging precipice a hunter had set up a simple image of the Blessed Virgin, out of gratitude for a miraculous escape from impending death in the wilderness. Hither the shepherd girl loved to drive her flock. It seemed to her that more grass grew there than anywhere else, and the sheep were always so quiet there that they really needed no watching.

Every morning the devout young shepherdess made it her duty, a pleasant one indeed, to gather a quantity of wild Alpine roses, to weave them into a garland and to entwine them gracefully about the statue of the Blessed Virgin. Then she would kneel before the garlanded image and hold devout, childlike converse and prayer with her blessed Mother in heaven. In reward for these simple acts of sincere and genuine piety, God was pleased to permit this devout soul to attain a high degree of Christian perfection. But her virtue was to be tested and proved. A severe fit of illness laid the poor girl on a bed

of pain. She was now unable to climb the mountain-height or to adorn the image of her beloved Mother. This thought made her sad, very sad indeed, so much so that she would not be comforted. Her anxious mother perceived that some secret sorrow was weighing down her child. When she discovered the cause she instructed her daughter how to weave a still more beautiful wreath of flowers, which, though it would be invisible to mortal eyes, would be pleasing to Mary, who would permit it to be placed at her sacred feet. The mother taught her child how to say the Rosary. The sick girl was at once comforted and happy, and ceased not to repeat over and over again her "Hail, Mary," firmly believing that each successive prayer was a fair, bright rose to adorn and honor her heavenly Queen.

Not only to this simple girl, but to all Christians tarrying here below in this vale of tears, and who carry about with them the two-fold burden of a heavy heart and troubled soul, God in His goodness has granted a means and an opportunity of adorning Mary with roses, and this, too, in an easy, loving and useful way.

Dearest reader, are you one of those servants of Mary, who often, every day if possible, exert themselves to decorate the brow of our Virgin Queen with the spiritual flowers composing the devotion of the beads? Do you entertain a high appreciation and a necessary comprehension of this sublime, though often despised and neglected devotion?

I. THE ROSARY AN EXCELLENT DEVOTION ON ACCOUNT OF ITS ORIGIN.

Many trials and afflictions weighed heavily on the Church of God during the thirteenth century. The hearts

of many Christians had become not only devoid of holy faith and Catholic charity, but filled with sensuality and godlessness. This was the case to an alarming extent in beautiful France, that country always so dear to the heart of the Blessed Virgin. In that land the restless, mischief-making Albigenses had seduced the people from the truth and led them into wicked excesses. In the year 1208 Pope Innocent sent to the affected districts a young, delicate, inexperienced monk, named Dominic, with orders to preach anew the exact doctrines of the Church on faith and morals. Dominic came to the scene of his future victories, armed simply with the weapons of truth and an unbounded confidence in the Blessed Virgin. Placing himself under her protection, and relying on her aid, he went manfully to work. To his fervent and constant prayers he added sighs, tears, fastings and other exercises of severe self-mortification in the hope of speedily appeasing divine justice. After three years of hard inward struggles and outward mortifications he was encouraged by the Blessed Virgin and taught by her how to proceed.

Going out one day from the city of Toulouse to a wood that was near by, he threw himself on his knees, and from the inmost depths of his heart cried out to God and His holy Mother for assistance in his discouraging work. He remained in the wood three days, praying fervently and strengthening the effect of his prayers by most severe penances and mortifications. Finally he sank down, weary and dispirited, on the ground. Then the glorious Queen, surrounded with dazzling splendor, appeared to him, and said in gentle tones, "You know, my son, the means made use of by God to redeem mankind. The first of these was the angel's greeting to me and his mes-

sage. This was followed by the mysterious and grace-bringing birth and the subsequent holy life of Jesus Christ. Finally came His glorious Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven. It was by these mysteries that the world was redeemed and the gates of heaven were opened. The self-same mysteries, in the life and Passion of Jesus Christ, together with the 'Lord's Prayer' and the 'Hail, Mary' several times repeated, form the garland of flowers that compose my Rosary. Announce and explain, then, this garland of mysterious roses to the stubborn heretics. It will be the beginning of their conversion." Having spoken these words the vision disappeared. St. Dominic rose from the ground much comforted, and returned to Toulouse.

Our saint, enlightened by this miraculous vision, understood that to the impetuous torrents of sin and error, it was necessary to oppose the power of simple prayer, for ignorance of Christian truths, and a consequent contempt for them, formed the fountain of the evil before him. Accordingly the saintly messenger of God, with irresistible eloquence, presented to his hearers the fifteen mysteries of the holy Rosary, as a short epitome of the Gospels, as an abstract of the life, sufferings and triumphs of Jesus Christ and of His immaculate Mother. These truths he repeated in his public prayer-services, and repeated them over and over again until he succeeded in imprinting them on the minds and hearts of the people.

2. THE ROSARY AN EFFECTIVE FORM OF PRAYER.

The effect of these preachings in Toulouse, Agen, Beziers, and other strongholds of heresy, surpassed all St. Dominic's expectations. Even Rome was astonished. The people now came in crowds to listen to the explana-

tion of the fifteen mysteries and to join in the common prayer of the holy Rosary. They clasped the beads affectionately, kissed them, and bedewed them with their tears. The sighing of the penitents often interrupted the sermons, and the public worship. Soon the churches were found to be too small to hold the crowds that presented themselves. In fact the devotion of the Rosary spread so rapidly, and brought down such blessings, that in the course of a few years thousands of heretics were reconciled to the Church and thousands of sinners were placed once more in the paths of penance and virtue. St. Liguori, when speaking on this subject, said, "As suddenly as the walls of Jericho crumbled down at the sounding of Josue's trumpets, so suddenly did the heretics and their heresies disappear before the power of the holy Rosary. The pool of Bethsaida, at Jerusalem, was not more healing to the diseases of the body than was the devotion of the Rosary for the diseases of sinners' souls. Aye, even the prophet Eliseus did not infuse life into as many dry bones as Dominic, by prayer, infused spiritual life into souls dry or stiff in vice, awakening them again to life and grace."

Thus the devotion of the Rosary had its origin directly from Heaven. Nor were the effects which it produced at its first appearance on earth less miraculous. Yet its whole excellency is not confined to this miraculous character.

The whole effort of the Christian must be so directed as to bring before his mind with practical effect the great work of redemption, together with the truths that it involves, thus strengthening his faith and thus, again, warming his heart with devotion. He must also bring frequently to his contemplation, and with vivid effect, the

virtuous examples of Jesus and Mary, in order to be able to imitate them truly and perseveringly. But one cannot find any means of bringing these examples more vividly and really before the eyes of his soul than they can be brought by the devotion of the Rosary. For in it are described briefly, but graphically and forcibly, in the so-called mysteries, their lives, and their sufferings and love for man. By means of these mysteries, or short epitomes, these events are deeply and permanently engraved on the memory-tablets of the Christian soul.

Yes, it is these mysteries that give to the devotion its whole value. They are the kernels, the sum and substance, the precious stones. About these precious stones the remaining portions of the devotion are entwined like a precious garland of flowers.

As when the priest at the altar puts the grains of incense into the fire in the censer, and causes a cloud of fragrant incense-smoke to rise towards heaven, so do we mingle with our prayers these precious mysteries, together with the infinite merits of Jesus and Mary. Could a more pleasing or a more fragrant incense of prayer be sent up to the Eternal Father than these mysteries, accompanied by "Pater Nosters" and "Ave Marias"?

It is these same mysteries, too, that raise the quality of a simple prayer to the value of a sacrifice. It is not merely pious desires, devout supplications and actual sighs and tears that ascend to heaven and to the heart of God, our Father, by means of the Rosary. The whole sum of those deeds and sacrifices, those sufferings and merits, whereby the great work of atonement was made possible, and by which it attained consummation, are offered up to a loving God by a pious and at the same time intelligent worshipper when reciting his Rosary. Moreover

the Christian, when praying properly on his beads, unites to these infinitely precious gifts of offering, which in themselves are pleasing to God, himself, his body, his soul, his avocations and his sufferings. Now, by virtue of this union, all that he is, and all that he has, becomes an acceptable gift of sacrifice to God.

As you are aware, Christian reader, these fifteen mysteries taken together form the whole Rosary, which is sometimes called the psalter. Five of the mysteries, together with the usual accompanying prayers, form a small Rosary. The first five mysteries compose what is called by some the joyful Rosary, because it contains the joyful message of redemption in the Annunciation, by the archangel Gabriel, as well as the conception and birth of the Redeemer, from the ever Blessed Virgin Mother of God. The five middle mysteries have reference to the sufferings of Christ and to the share which our sorrowful Mother had in them. This part of the Rosary is therefore designated as the mournful Rosary. The third or glorious Rosary contains the mysteries of the glory and triumph of Jesus and Mary in the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, as well as in the Assumption and Coronation of Mary. Hence we call this the glorious Rosary.

This three-fold division affords this advantage : one or the other may be said, whether in public or private devotion, according to the times or festivals occurring during the ecclesiastical year. Again, those persons who have not time or opportunity to recite the whole fifteen decades of the beads, may nevertheless be able to weave a lovely and precious garland of spiritual roses and to place it at the feet of their beloved Mother.

Christian piety endeavors still further to use these fif-

teen holy mysteries in another manner, to the spiritual advancement and advantage of souls. In order that the attention to the grace-laden events of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and of the redemption of man, may not be limited to the brief period occupied in saying the Rosary, but be extended throughout the length of the day, an ingenious division and distribution has been invented, whereby the prayerful Christian is kept constantly in mind of the blessings of redemption. One mystery has been assigned to each of the fifteen hours intervening between getting up and retiring to rest. Thus, by availing himself of this method, the Christian may keep himself constantly at prayer and meditation and in a consciousness of the presence of God.

The first mystery of the joyful part of the Rosary falls, of course, to the first hour after rising from bed. The last mystery of the glorious part of the Rosary closes the day. At each separate devotional exercise the Christian presents the sacred mystery before his mind and heart and, uniting himself to it, offers it up to his heavenly Father. He then closes the brief exercise with a devout "Hail, Mary" to the Blessed Virgin. It is impossible to describe, Christian reader, how effectually such a devotion contributes to the sanctification of souls. Practise it often. Be not deterred by difficulties. Even if you sometimes forget it, still persevere. In a short time it will become a pleasant, easy and profitable habit which you would not wish to lay aside.

3. THE ROSARY AWAKENS AND STRENGTHENS CONFIDENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN.

If, as we certainly do, we expect to obtain a hearing

for our prayers, and to have them granted, on what do we base our hopes and expectations? On what else than the merits and love of Jesus Christ in His birth, in His life, in His sufferings and death, and also on the motherly love of Mary? Hence the soul of the Christian at prayer ever repeats, "through the merits of Thy Son, who for our sake was born, crucified, and buried, hear us, O Eternal Father; through thy Son, whom thou, O Virgin, didst conceive, bring forth and offer up, we beseech thee to pray for us!"

Christ Himself has said: "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you" (John xvi. 23). Are not these words verified in the devotion of the holy Rosary in a most remarkable manner? Are not the merits of Jesus and His Mother offered up to the Eternal Father? Does He not hear us, and grant our petitions, out of consideration and by virtue of those merits?

Every word contained in the devotion of the Rosary is in itself highly sacred and sanctified. Are they not words that have been made holy by the very lips of the Redeemer, who Himself taught us to use them in prayer? Sanctified, too, they have been by a prince of heaven, who first pronounced the "Hail, Mary." Have not these words been uttered for centuries by the lips of holy, heroic, self-sacrificing martyrs, and consecrated virgins? Millions of poor, grief-stricken, abandoned, deeply bowed down souls have, with confidence, sent these words on the wings of fervent prayer to Heaven, mingling with them their sighs and tears. These words have kept company with the penitential tears of contrite sinners, and with the charity-fires of holy, innocent souls. In short, these words of the holy Rosary have been the language with which men have held converse with God, and which a kind and

loving God has been at all times ready to hear and to grant.

But you may object and say: "Such frequent repetition of the same thing, the constant reiteration of the 'Hail, Mary,' for instance, deprives the prayer of dignity, of devotion, of all good effect." Christian reader, there are certain kinds of food that are always laid before us on the table, that are never absent, and yet they never become distasteful to us, and do not disagree with us. Bread, for instance. We must partake of such food because it agrees best with us. So it is with the prayers that God has taught us. They correspond the best to the nature of the human soul. For God knows best, and He has the right to prescribe in what way He should be prayed to and worshipped. These simple words, so often repeated, and so full of the deepest and sublimest meaning, must by constant practise become gradually identified with the every-day thoughts and dispositions of him who repeats them.

4. THE ROSARY SIMPLE AND EASY.

The holy Rosary is simple, easy, and well adapted to the comprehension of the lowly and unlettered, as well as of the better educated. The child who is barely able to repeat the words of the "Our Father," the simple man who cannot read and who is just capable of understanding the necessary elementary truths of his religion, can easily learn how to practise the devotion of the Rosary by merely listening to others repeating the few simple prayers composing it. Such persons, too, retain and remember it easily, for the arrangement is plain and simple. They also understand its meaning without much mental effort, for it contains the best known and the most striking

incidents in the lives of Jesus and Mary. The learned man discovers in it the sum and substance of divine revelation, an epitome of theology. To those persons who have made the greatest progress in the way of Christian perfection, it offers an inexhaustible object for meditation and a perpetual incentive to mental prayer.

In the days of our forefathers, when books were scarce and costly, and when many were unable to read them, scarce as they were, the Christian people had one universal mode of addressing their prayers to Heaven. This was the devotion of the Rosary. Who would venture to maintain that the piety and the devotion of those past ages were inferior in any respect to this age of innumerable prayer-books, many of which are void of true devotional strength and wholesomeness?

Even to-day can there be any state of Christian society where another form of devotion would be more useful and profitable than that of the Rosary? Some poor, neglected, yet pious person lies for weeks, day and night, all alone on his bed of sickness and pain, with no one but God to speak to. Take from such a person his prayer-beads. How shall he pass the weary hours? How forget his pains? Where can he find words of prayer to address to his God? How shall he ask for strength and patience? Place his beads in his trembling hands and he is happy, for like the pious shepherdess, who is described in the initial paragraphs of this chapter, he feels that it is yet in his power to weave a garland of simple spiritual flowers and to lay it at the feet of his blessed Lady. The solitary traveller on his journey, whether in the trackless desert or on the boundless ocean, whether at day or night, the pious laborer in the field, the seamstress at her needle, the mechanic

at his trade, the mother of a family at the bedside of her sick children, all these, if they desire to pray, can say their Rosary unnoticed and unheard, save by God alone. What more delightful occupation on a long winter evening for a family, that is too tired after their day's work to seek outside amusement and too scrupulous to waste their time in idle and useless conversation, than to recite the Rosary together? In old age, when our strength wanes, when our faculties fail, especially our eyesight, when books weary us, when pleasure has lost its charms for us, when eternity draws near, what more consoling and useful devotion can we have than the simple recital of the holy Rosary?

Yes, the Rosary is adapted to the comprehension and circumstances of every individual. It is a common property among all good Christians, and, therefore, is in the widest and truest sense, a Catholic, that is, universal devotion.

5. INDULGENCES ATTACHED TO THE DEVOTION OF THE ROSARY.

You know, Christian reader, that there is a widely spread association called the Living Rosary Society. You are also aware that to the members of this Society many indulgences have been granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs. Of this Society and its indulgences we make fuller mention in another part of this work, on page 304. Here we shall simply state that even those who are not members of any Rosary Society may gain many of these indulgences if they say their beads with proper intention and devotion. Pope Benedict XIII., in a letter dated the 13th of April, 1726, granted to all the faithful who with a penitential heart would say the Rosary, an indulgence

of a hundred days for each "Our Father" and each "Hail, Mary," also a plenary indulgence once a year, to be gained on any day chosen by such persons, provided they have said the Rosary once every day during the year. On the 12th of May, 1851, Pope Pius IX. confirmed these grants, and added to them another, giving ten years and ten quarantines, that is, ten times forty days, to all the faithful who say the Rosary in common with each other, whether publicly in the church or in the family circle, or in any other place. To all persons who make a practise of reciting the Rosary at least three times a week, and who comply with the usual conditions, namely, the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist, a visit to a church or public chapel, and the prayer for the intention of the Pope, a plenary indulgence is granted on the last Sunday of every month.

In order to gain these indulgences the person must have prayer-beads blessed by an authorized priest. He must also, while uttering the prayers and telling his beads, meditate on the mysteries of the birth, Passion and death of Jesus Christ. For those, however, who are unable to meditate, it is sufficient if they recite the Rosary with as much devotion as they can.

From all that you have here read about the holy Rosary, you ought, Christian reader, to feel yourself moved to recite your Rosary frequently and piously, for the sake of your own temporal and spiritual welfare, for the benefit of your fellow-beings, and for the love of your beloved Mother, Mary, the Queen of the Rosary.

CHAPTER VI.

The Golden Crown.

It is for us all a source of edification and happiness, dear reader, to be able to count our late Holy Father, the lamented Pius IX., of blessed memory, among the most ardent and devoted servants of Mary. He was a man who not only cherished in his inmost heart, and acted in his outward life, a deep and loving reverence for the ever blessed Mother of God, but also, by virtue of his high, his divine office, diffused the same devotion throughout the present generation, and for generations yet to come, by authorizing and establishing many devotional practises in her honor, by proclaiming authoritatively her sublime prerogatives, and by founding sodalities and other associations in her blessed name. This grand and saintly Vicar of Christ was not content to proclaim, to the great joy of the whole Church, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. He wished to adorn, in a very significant, striking and loving manner, with a golden crown, her whom he had thus sublimely glorified in her Immaculate Conception. But what is this golden crown with which Pius IX. adorned the pure Mother of God, and which he desired should ever continue to adorn her? *

* This explanation of the Devotion of the Golden Crown is taken from the pastoral letter addressed by the Prince Bishop of Seckau to his diocesans, in December, 1875.

It may be proper to speak first figuratively. Picture to yourself, Christian reader, a venerated mother surrounded by her children. It is the feast of that mother, perhaps her name's day, her patron saint's festival. Hence all her children come gathering about her, each one bringing some present to her. The present is chosen that pleases her most.

Sometimes it is a garland of flowers, and the flowers are so tastefully chosen that each flower is made to represent each child, while all combined represent the family of children, who are indeed a mother's crown.

The mother is well pleased with this offering of flowers. She is deserving of it. It is appropriate. It is a sign, an evidence, of love and respect on the part of her children. But dearer still to her heart is the circle of children themselves. They form, in her eyes, a beautiful garland of lovely flowers. Thus the mother is crowned with two crowns: one is composed of the flowers on her brow, the other consists of the children at her feet, where they have gathered in love and respect.

Now, Mary is our Mother, and we are her children. The 8th day of December is her great feast of honor and glory, on which all devout children of Mary, in union with the whole Church, render special thanks to the ever adorable Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the miraculous favor and grace that Mary obtained by remaining free from the stain of all sin, from the first moment of her conception. Although it has been our custom to observe the feast every year, on this particular feast of the present year we wish to gather about our immaculate Mother with more special love, a deeper veneration, and more sincere gratitude, to thank her for all past graces, to renew before her our good resolutions

for the future, to ask her for continued help to keep them, and to pledge ourselves to her that we will remain her true and loving children till the hour of death. Thus it is that we form, for her acceptance, a living crown of gold, a triple crown of glory, for although but one crown it is composed of three distinct crowns. The first crown consists of the united priests of the secular and regular orders. The second is composed of all the persons of the female religious communities. The third embraces all the faithful laity of the Church. Thus all united together, we are also united in our desire to be a crown for Mary, the immaculate Queen of heaven and earth.

But we are not satisfied with being a crown for Mary. We wish also to bring her a crown, that is, we wish to accomplish something special for her greater honor and glory. And what shall we do? Pius IX. himself gives us the answer by appointing pious works to be performed by the priests, the female religious and the laity. These exercises he calls the Golden Crown. The devotions of the Golden Crown are as follows:

I. FOR PRIESTS.

The Holy Father thus directs through his cardinal-vicar, "This Golden Crown consists of the offering up of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, which thirty-one priests, joined together in a golden circle, or crown, agree to perform, each one on a different day of the month. The Mass is to be celebrated with the intention of doing special honor to the Mother of God. These priests will offer up the divine sacrifice to the ever adorable Trinity in union with all the saints who dwell in heaven with Jesus Christ, and also with all the elect still sojourning on the earth. They will render thanks to the Blessed

Trinity in the name of the Blessed Virgin, for the immeasurable, countless and distinguished privileges with which she was so remarkably endowed, and more especially for the pre-eminent grace of her Immaculate Conception. The priests are also to earnestly supplicate the ever Blessed Virgin herself for protection and help in the present necessities of our holy Mother, the Church, for the conversion of sinners in general and for the intention of the Roman Pontiff."

But as it happened that only a few among the priests were able to apply the required intention, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, on an appointed day in the month, the difficulty was met thus : "Whenever any priest is unable to apply the intention of the Mass on the day designated, he may celebrate it on another day, or request another priest to say it on the appointed day."

As each group or circle of priests numbers thirty-one, and as five of the months have each less than thirty-one days, there occurs on the last day of each short month more than one Mass.

The idea of this Golden Crown Devotion originated as late as the year 1852, yet so great was the favor that it found among the bishops and the priests, and so deep and true was their desire to honor and love Mary, that during the last half of the year 1853 more than a thousand Masses were celebrated in her honor every day, and with all the above described intentions. Greatly encouraged at this, the bishops requested the Holy Father to provide for the permanent continuance of the devotion of the Golden Crown, by affording it canonical approbation and recognition.

The Pope acceded gladly, established the Golden Crown forever in the Church of Our Lady of Peace

(Santa Maria Della Pace—Santa Maria Pacifica) in Rome. This church is the central point of the devotion. The Holy Father is the first member and the Chief Head and Protector. The cardinal-vicar in Rome is the chief officer of the Golden Crown.

In response to the petition of the bishops, the same Pontiff forwarded to them and to all heads of Religious Orders, a letter in which he invited them most cordially to communicate the grant to all the priests and members of communities, and to bid them to participate in the devotion and its benefits. It ought to be easy to find in every diocese a Golden Circle of thirty-one devoted priests, who would each offer up on a certain day of the month the holy sacrifice of the Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Immaculate, with the required conditions and intentions. By means of this one Mass each member of the circle becomes partaker in the benefits of thousands of daily Masses and communions. These advantages he acquires not alone for the benefit of souls in general, but also as a blessing from God to help him to save the particular souls entrusted to his care.

2. FOR RELIGIOUS WOMEN AND THE LAITY WHO BELONG TO THE GOLDEN CROWN.

In the above-named rescript the cardinal-vicar of Rome, in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff, urges the bishops to encourage members of their flocks to join this association of the Golden Crown. He exhorts them to advise, through their spiritual directors, women in convents, and also the laity through their respective pastors, to offer up their communions to the Blessed Trinity, in gratitude for all the favors that have been bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin, and more especially in gratitude for her

sublime prerogative of the Immaculate Conception. He reminds them that the immaculate Mother of God will never fail to obtain by her intercession, so powerful with God, help and strength for her faithful servants. If they endeavor to advance her honor and to cultivate her devotion, by venerating her in her chief prerogatives, but more especially in the Immaculate Conception, which is her greatest pride and joy, her intercession for them will infallibly have the happiest effect.

We now come to the spiritual advantages that may be obtained by devout members of the Golden Crown. They are three-fold: First, there is the powerful intercession of Mary to obtain from God, for every faithful member, protection in the hour of danger and assistance in the hour of death, as well as all through life; secondly, there are many holy indulgences; and thirdly, the members share in all the Masses, communions and prayers which are offered up with this intention, all over the world.

I do not know how many members belong at the present time to the "Devotion of the Golden Crown." Taking a probable number for our basis, we may estimate that during each month of the year about one hundred thousand Masses, and more than eight millions of communions, are offered up for this intention. Thus every clerical and lay member of the Golden Crown becomes every day a participator in the merits of three thousand two hundred Masses, and nearly three hundred thousand communions. In the course of the year he shares in the merits of one million two hundred thousand Masses and more than a hundred million of communions. To all this add the countless prayers of the members.

Finally, the deceased members of the Golden Crown

have the benefit of the Masses offered up specially for them every year in the church of this society, St. Mary's of Peace, in Rome. One special Mass for the repose of each soul is celebrated there.

In publishing the rescript of the Holy Father, the cardinal-vicar, who is also the head of the association of the Golden Crown, concludes in these words, "We are convinced that the bishops, and the heads of Religious Orders, in their distinguished piety and zeal, will strive with fatherly solicitude to induce the priests under their charge to offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass for the above-stated intention, and by example contribute to the special veneration of the ever blessed Mother of God among their respective flocks, and that they will labor to incite in the hearts of the laity an increase of tender love for the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, for in these times, so disastrous to faith, morals and Christian piety, nothing can be more opportune, more comforting, or more assuring than to have recourse to our blessed Lady. That ever pure Virgin ceases not to protect and to defend with motherly care and love all her devout clients, more especially those who, beside her other prerogatives, honor and praise her favorite prerogative of Immaculate Conception."

CHAPTER VII.

The Miraculous Medal of the Immaculate Conception.

Our benignant Mother, Mary, protects, helps and heals all those who place their confidence in her. In order to augment, diffuse and maintain such confidence among the children of men, she, in her generous love, has placed within their reach many ingenious and profitable means and devices. One of the most remarkable of these means is the Miraculous Medal of the Immaculate Conception.

In the year 1830 a devout young novice, an inmate of a convent devoted to works of charity in the city of Paris, in France, was favored one day while in an ecstasy of prayer, with a sweet vision which showed to her the Blessed Virgin, in the position in which she is usually represented in the picture of the Immaculate Conception, that is, in a full life-size, standing position, with outstretched arms. Her two hands seemed to emit clusters of rays of bright light, or fire. At the same time the astonished novice heard the words, "These rays of light are a figure of the graces which Mary obtains for creatures, while the point of the globe on which she stands represents France." In an arc of a circle about the head of the vision could be plainly read the inscription, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

In a few minutes the vision-picture was reversed to her sight, and the novice, filled with wonder, saw a large figure of the letter M, with a cross rising from the middle part of it, while under the letter were the two sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary. Then the novice heard again a voice saying, "Let a medal be struck off representing this vision; and all who shall wear such medal, after it has been blessed by the prayers of the Church, and shall repeat devoutly the short ejaculation inscribed upon it, shall be made worthy to enjoy the special protection of the Mother of God."

The day following this vision the young novice had occasion to meet her Father Confessor, to whom she revealed what she had seen and heard. The prudent priest, fearing some illusion, summarily dismissed the Sister and her story, telling her at the same time that true and genuine respect and love for Mary consisted in a faithful imitation of her virtues.

The vision appeared again to the novice, a second and a third time, the same mysterious voice urging her to comply with the injunctions given to have the medals struck off. At last her spiritual director deemed it his duty to lay the matter before his spiritual superior, the Most Rev. Archbishop of Paris. That devout prelate declared that there could be no objection to striking off the medal in the form prescribed, more especially as it involved nothing contrary to the faith of the Catholic Church, but rather was in every way calculated to awaken and nourish the hearts of the faithful to a great devotion to the Mother of Our Lord.

No sooner were the medals struck off than they found their way into every part of France. The Sisters of Charity gave them to their patients in the hospitals, where

they worked miracles in curing invalid bodies and in winning sinful souls to God. In a few short years these medals appeared in gold, silver, and copper, in immense numbers. Pious mothers knew no better object to present to their children as a Christmas gift than a Miraculous Medal. From all quarters came the most edifying accounts of the spiritual efficacy and power of this new medal. It stirred up Christian zeal in town and country. In families, and even in whole parishes, where Catholic faith and piety had become almost extinct, the most fervent practice of religious duties was re-established and remained permanently fixed. The miraculous effects which it produced in the realm of nature, as well as in the sphere of divine grace, won for it on all sides the high title of the Miraculous Medal.

Any person wearing devoutly and reverently, and with sentiments of faith, this medal when blessed by a priest, may obtain a plenary indulgence, 1, on the day of reception; 2, on Easter Sunday; 3, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. (Leo XIII., 12th of November, 1895.)

One of the most remarkable miracles, and one most fraught with blessings, was the conversion of the celebrated Jew, Alphonse Ratisbonne, who always attributed his call to the true faith to the influence of the Miraculous Medal, joined with the prayers of the faithful.

Ratisbonne was a member of a prominent family of Strasbourg, and a young man distinguished for his excellent qualities of mind and heart. Towards the end of the year 1842 he became engaged to a young Jewish lady with whom he fondly hoped to lead a happy married life. While awaiting the coming of the time appointed for his marriage, he resolved to set out on a tour to the Eastern

countries and to visit the principal cities of Italy on his way. He would not pass through Rome, for as a Jew, he cherished a deadly hatred for that Christian city. Fully resolved not to visit the capital of the Popes, he was already on his way to Palermo, when, irresistibly impelled by some secret influence, inexplicable to himself, he changed his route of travel and went towards Rome. He was resolved, however, to visit and study only the most famous ruins and monuments of pagan antiquity and, while moving among the classic regions, to foster and strengthen his dislike for everything Catholic. This unbounded antipathy for the Catholic Church was heightened and strengthened by the fact that a short time previously his elder brother, Theodore, had not only renounced the Jewish creed and embraced Christianity, but had entered a Religious Order and had been ordained a Catholic priest.

The same prejudices which he had carried in his heart when going to Rome, induced him to hurry away from the place. But he wished, before leaving, to pay a visit to a young friend of his who dwelt in the Eternal City. This young man, whose name was Gustave de Bussières was a most strenuous adherent to his own religion, which was Protestantism. The servant or guide, in a mistake, led Ratisbonne to Theodore de Bussières, a brother of Gustave, who had himself renounced Protestantism and had become a devout Catholic. To Ratisbonne the ardent young convert spoke with the utmost enthusiasm about Rome, which he styled the heart of the Catholic world, and the centre of Catholic unity. Ratisbonne, suspecting a hidden desire on the part of his friend to try to convert him, answered curtly and proudly, "I am a Jew and intend to die a Jew." However, Baron de Bus-

sières, encouraged by an interior impulse of hope and zeal, ventured to offer to his guest a Miraculous Medal of the Immaculate Conception. Ratisbonne was politely declining the offer, when two little daughters of Baron de Bussières begged him to permit them to place the medal about his neck with their own hands. Politeness and courtesy forbade a refusal to this request of the children, and the Jew consented. Besides he yielded to a pressing request of the children that he would repeat the well known prayer "Memorare," etc. (Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary.) This promise he made, however, with some limitation, saying he would now and then read the words without putting any faith in them. He then took his departure, secretly vexed at what he had done. Baron de Bussières and his family, together with some few friends, began at once to offer up fervent prayers for the conversion of the young Jew. He felt a secret conviction that Ratisbonne would not leave Rome without becoming a Catholic. On the three following days de Bussières accompanied his young friend in his visits to the remarkable places in Rome. The old Jewish prejudice and hatred against Catholicity were still strong in Ratisbonne's mind. He looked with icy indifference on the monuments of Christianity. It happened just then that a respected and beloved friend of de Bussières died and the latter had occasion to enter the Church of St. Andrea delle Fratte in order to make some arrangements about the funeral. On his way to the church he providentially met the man the salvation of whose soul was so dear to his heart. Together they walked towards the sacred edifice, intending to resume afterwards their ordinary sight-seeing, when de Bussières would have settled about the coming funeral.

But the hour of grace had come. Both entered the

church. Alphonse Ratisbonne walked carelessly about the building, as those persons usually do who view a church in the light of a picture gallery. Meanwhile de Bussières was absent in the vestry some twelve minutes talking with one of the monks of the adjoining monastery. On returning to the church, what a surprise! Ratisbonne was lying prostrate at full length, his face on the stone pavement of the church, and his whole being convulsed with deep, religious emotion. Baron de Bussières could hardly believe his eyesight. Yet there was no deception. There lay his friend in the chapel of St. Michael. There the prince of darkness had suffered another defeat before the great archangel. Filled with astonishment, de Bussières approached his friend and spoke to him. But his words met with no reply. He touched him gently, but elicited no sign of recognition from his Hebrew friend. After some time Alphonse slowly raised his head and showed a countenance all bedewed with tears. He then related what had taken place, at the same time drawing forth from his bosom the Miraculous Medal which he pressed fervently to his quivering lips. "I was," he said, "but a short time in the church, when I suddenly felt myself overcome by an indescribable unrest and anxiety. Raising my eyes it seemed as if the whole building disappeared from my view, leaving only one small chapel all beaming with dazzling light. In the midst of this brightness the Blessed Virgin appeared, standing over the altar. She was as bright as the sun, with a majesty tempered with gentleness beaming from her whole figure. She looked just as she appears on this medal. I felt an irresistible power drawing me towards her. Then she made a sign with her hand that I should kneel down. Though she did not speak, I seemed to understand her wishes."

What did Ratisbonne understand? His subsequent life revealed all. He was baptized in due time; afterwards became a priest, and travelled to the Holy Land in order to instruct the blinded Jews.

PART IV.

How the Blessed Virgin is Honored by the Religious Orders and Confraternities.

CHAPTER I.

How Mary is Honored in the Cloistered Orders.

Every Christian is obliged to imitate Christ, to attain to Christian perfection. In Mary, the Mother of Jesus, every well-meaning Christian discovers the most glorious example and the most powerful help in accomplishing the difficult task of walking resolutely in the way of salvation.

It is, however, in a special manner the bounden duty of the Religious Orders to imitate the perfection of Christ, to imitate the virtues of the Blessed Virgin and to honor her in her attainment of Christian perfection.

The members of every Religious Order bind themselves to the observance of the evangelical counsels by pronouncing the vows of chastity, obedience and poverty. But, Christian reader, can there be, after the divine Redeemer Himself, a more beautiful, more winning or more perfect model in this respect than Mary of Nazareth ?

The member of a Religious Order solemnly vows eternal chastity; what is it that impels him to the utterance of such a vow? What encourages and enables him to keep it? It is the example of the pure and immaculate Virgin, the chaste Mother of God. It is also that distinguished approval which the Almighty has been pleased to extend to all virginal souls, in choosing a pure virgin to be the Mother of His only-begotten Son. But, still, extraordinary fortitude and abundant grace are required in order to enable man to persevere during a long life in his ceaseless struggles against the unceasing assaults of hell, the world, and his own inordinate inclinations. Oh, how often must such an earnest soul, consecrated as he is to God, seek this fortitude and this grace before the image of her who was not only adorned by her Lord with the glorious attribute of perfect purity, but who herself in the brightest years of her youth, spontaneously and joyfully uttered her vows of perpetual virginity! She uttered them, too, in opposition to the wishes, opinions and fixed ideas of her people, uttered them with the full knowledge and understanding that she was thereby excluding herself from the most sublime dignity attainable by woman, namely, the dignity of becoming the mother of the promised Messias. Who will say that the help-needing and help-seeking soul of man will not find strength and grace from such a Virgin? Is it not becoming that Mary should be propitious to those persons who by reason of their vows, their sacrifices, and their struggles seek to resemble her as closely as possible in the sublime characteristic of purity, and who endeavor to nullify the evil effects of original sin in their souls?

The member of a Religious Order makes a vow of voluntary and perfect poverty. At the moment that he

willingly renounces his worldly goods, and disclaims all right to the things of earth, then, and ever afterwards when he finds in his bare and lonely cell hardly the necessaries of life, and certainly none of its comforts, there rises before his contented gaze, to gladden his heart and soul, the first, the most beautiful, the most lovable temple of holy poverty that the world ever saw, namely, the lowly home of Mary at Nazareth. Before the eyes of his satisfied soul appears the gentle figure of the Virgin who, although descended of a kingly family, was pleased to share with her spouse, St. Joseph, himself of royal blood, his laborious duties, to eat with him the bread earned by the sweat of his brow. Who will venture to say that this holy Mother of Jesus, she who was of her own choice poor in worldly riches, that she might be rich in heavenly graces—who will say that she does not look down benignly, lovingly and encouragingly on those persons who strive to imitate her divine Son—who had not wherein to lay His head?

Every member of a Religious Order utters a vow of holy obedience. This is the hardest of all sacrifices, for it subjects his own opinions, his own will, even his free disposal of his own person, to the command of a creature like himself. Here, too, the example of the Blessed Virgin is needed to strengthen and to comfort the obedient monk. When the angel of the Lord brought to her the message that she would conceive of the Holy Ghost, she at once yielded a willing consent, although she did not comprehend the nature of the duty required at her hands. She said cheerfully and humbly, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word!" It was thus that Mary, by her believing obedience, loosened the unhappy fetters which had been

riveted on the soul of man by the doubting and disobedient Eve. That consent of Mary's, that submissive "Fiat," or "Be it done," prevails both in theory and practice to-day in every phase of convent life. The Mother of that Lord and Saviour, who Himself was obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross, will afford help and confidence to every loving and believing soul in the hour of its most trying sacrifice of obedience.

In the course of ages God and the requirements of souls brought forth many holy founders of Religious Orders. These were saintly men who, with souls filled with love for God and with His divine grace, by their rules of life, by their experience, and by their devotedness to God, were to mark out the way of perfection for themselves, and for hundreds of thousands of their obedient sons and daughters in religion. And if these heaven-inspired men recognized in the Blessed Virgin the most lovable and glorious example of Christian perfection, if, too, they bequeathed to their several religious institutes, as a precious legacy, a sincere, inward reverence for the glorious Queen of heaven, they did so because they saw in all this devotion a powerfully efficient means of sanctification. They understood, however, that this devotion should consist not so much in devotional practices as in a true and joyous imitation of her life, her virtues, her reverence for God, and her love for the holy Church and for immortal souls. Hence we find that the hearts of religious people, who have cheerfully renounced every sensual affection, invariably glow with a spiritualized, self-sacrificing love for the ever immaculate Virgin.

All Religious Orders, too, honor and glorify the Mother of Jesus by their sacred vows. For in the observance of

these vows they seek not only to imitate her life in a general way, but they also endeavor, by a life of increasing sacrifice, to attain, as nearly as possible, to that perfection of life and fulness of grace which the Mother of God attained in consequence of her Immaculate Conception —a happy state, which all the rest of mankind lost by the defection of our first parents.

We read in Church history that even in the days of the apostles, and in the immediately succeeding centuries, many pious Christians of both sexes were called by the voice of Heaven to serve God as hermits in the solitude of the desert. Egypt especially, that favored land hallowed by the footsteps of the Blessed Virgin, of her divine Infant, and of her chaste spouse, was in those early times a very sanctuary, where the most angelic lives were led by thousands. Writers of ancient Church history describe these Egyptian deserts as blooming gardens of sanctity, whose peaceful solitudes resounded day and night with the praises of God and Mary.

1. THE BENEDICTINES.

St. Benedict, who died in the year 543, was the real founder of regularly organized religious life in Europe. It is true, indeed, that in his Heaven-inspired rule of life we do not read any special command, or even counsel, to honor the Mother of God, but yet we can say this much, namely, that it was this Order that planted in Europe devotion to Mary, cultivated it, diffused it, and established it firmly in the hearts of the people, in the same way in which it established and maintained faith and science among the rude Europeans.

One of the fundamental principles of the Benedictine

Order is, "Nothing shall have the preference before the service of God." It was in virtue of such principle that there grew up within the cloister-walls of that Order our admirable Psalmody, or chant of sacred song, ever since used in the service of the Church. Within the sacred precincts of the Benedictine chantries might be heard at all hours of the day and night the sounds of praise to God and His blessed Mother. It was in this Order, too, that the cycle of the Church festivals took its rise and assumed its present beautiful and regular form. The feasts of the Blessed Virgin were ever solemnized with strict punctuality, much tender devotion, and careful and elaborate ceremony. A very ancient and reliable tradition avers that in every church of that Order, although the church itself might not be specially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the first altar next to the grand altar was invariably consecrated to her. Some of the most sumptuous cathedrals that were dedicated to Mary were erected by the members of the Benedictine Order. The same Fathers, century after century, maintained and served many places of pilgrimage where the Mother of God was pleased to obtain countless blessings of soul and body for devout pilgrims. Among these the most notable are Our Lady of Einsiedeln, in Switzerland; Montserrat, in Spain; and Altotting, in Bavaria. Among the many thousands of saints produced by this ancient Order of St. Benedict we discover untold numbers of devout and learned servants of Mary. The pious belief in the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the holy Mother of God ever found in the ranks of this Order its ablest and most eloquent defenders. The very feast itself was permanently established in the year 667 by St. Ildephonsus, himself a Benedictine.

2. THE FRANCISCANS.

The Order of St. Francis found the cradle of its infancy in a sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin, namely, the Church of Our Lady of Angels, at Assisi. The blessed founder of the Order, St. Francis, was called "the seraph," on account of the angelic love for God that dwelt within his pure soul. In loving God he took Mary for his model, whose love for the Blessed Trinity far transcends the love of all the seraphim and cherubim. All through his active life he labored to promote what he knew to be the dearest wish of Mary's heart, namely, that Jesus Christ should be ever known and firmly beloved by all the sons and daughters of Adam. He loved to preach often and fervidly on the most adorable Saviour, especially on the mystery of the Incarnation. He loved and honored Jesus in His character as Saviour in the manger, or in the arms of His blessed Mother in the stable at Bethlehem. He loved also to imitate Jesus and Mary in their poverty and humility in every circumstance of their lives on earth. And, indeed, that is the tenderest and most salutary means of honoring Mary. To honor her on the one hand in her dignity of God's Mother, and on the other to love and reverence her in her poverty and abandonment—no other means could be more tender and salutary. Ever since the days of St. Francis, who died in the year 1226, his faithful sons have never ceased to venerate Mary in the most eminent manner in her maternal dignity, and to imitate her in her poverty.

3. THE DOMINICANS.

The sons of St. Dominic are the champions of the holy Rosary. Hence they must necessarily be devoted ser-

vants of Mary. Who has not heard of the inestimable good that they have wrought for their fellow-men, and of the incalculable glory they have shed on Mary's name by means of this glorious devotion of the Rosary? For centuries, too, the Dominicans were the standard-bearers of Church discipline and knowledge. Who is not familiar with the name of St. Thomas of Aquinas, called the "angelic doctor?" Who does not know, moreover, that this great saint imbibed all his wondrous knowledge under the shadow of the crucifix, and near the "Seat of Wisdom?"

4. THE JESUITS.

To refute the heresies of the so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century, and to form a bulwark of resistance to the disasters that threatened the Church in consequence of that rebellion, God raised up an army of brave and learned champions of the truth in the Society of the Jesuits. It was the Blessed Virgin who, unknown to himself, trained, educated and fitted the saintly founder of this glorious Order for his sublime mission. From a soldier of the world, Mary transformed Ignatius of Loyola into a brave and zealous servant of God. This miraculous transition in the saint took place at the foot of the celebrated miraculous image of the Virgin in the sanctuary of Montserrat. In defence of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, in promoting love and devotion to the Mother of God, in carrying her name to the four quarters of the globe, the Jesuits have been prominently active and successful. Remember, Christian reader, the name of the great apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, the beloved companion of St. Ignatius. Recall what you have read and heard of his childlike love for

his blessed Mother, of all the hardships and exposures he suffered and the dangers he encountered when, throughout his extensive missions, he labored to establish love for Jesus and Mary. Many of the most efficient sodalities instituted to honor Mary, took their rise among the followers of St. Ignatius.

5. THE REDEMPTORISTS.

Dear Christian reader, have you ever read more beautiful, more tender, or more devotional, writings than those of that great doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus Liguori? How sublime the sentiments that pervade all his works on the Blessed Virgin, more especially his well-known "Glories of Mary"! No man, save one whose soul is ravished with the most inward love for the immaculate Mother, could write as he has written. This illustrious servant of God was the founder of the Redemptorists, or Liguorians, an Order whose members have ever been champions of Mary's honor, and who to-day are loved and revered by the faithful because of their zeal in that sacred cause. St. Liguori, when dying, in the year 1789, bequeathed as a precious legacy to his faithful sons a sincere love for the Queen of heaven and earth.

6. THE KNIGHTLY ORDERS.

That monks and nuns, in the peaceful solitudes of their cells and chapels, seek, by pious devotion, solemn chants, and profound contemplation, to honor Mary, awakens no surprise in our souls. We look upon it as a matter of course. But we are not so readily disposed to look for such tender piety among those who mingle in the turmoil and distractions of the world. Yet there have been associations of noble, eminent men in the

world, princes of peace and heroes of the battle-field, whose large, brave hearts have throbbed with the tenderest sentiments of filial piety and devotedness towards their blessed Lady in heaven. Such were the associations of men, known in the history of the Church as the Religious Knights. In contrast to the oppression and the unworthy treatment of the female sex among the pagan nations, especially before the time of Christ, the women of Christian peoples at all times, but notably in the chivalric Middle Ages, became the objects of tender, pure and respectful affection and esteem. Female honor was looked upon as something sacred. To defend and protect it was the noble duty of the Knight. All this was founded naturally on supernatural religious love and reverence for the Blessed Virgin Mary, the purest, fairest and noblest specimen of the devout female sex.

Towards the close of the eleventh century all Europe resounded with the loud and bitter complaints and the urgent appeals of the Eastern Christians for help and protection against the Saracens. Everywhere was heard in response to these cries the watchword of the enthusiastic peoples of Europe who, in their desire to aid their oppressed brethren, cried, "God wills it, God wills it!" Then the Christian heroes united in bands and societies in order to conquer and to hold possession of Palestine which had been the fatherland, not only of the Redeemer, but also of their blessed Lady and Patroness. The Crusader vowed and resolved to protect and defend the Christian pilgrims in their wanderings through the places made sacred by the precious blood of the suffering Saviour. Then sprang into existence the Knights of St. John, or the Knights of Malta, the Order of the Knight Templars, the German Knights, and others of the same

kind. The last-named Knights entertained a marked devotion to the Blessed Virgin. It took its rise from a confraternity that had been established in the year 1128 for the purpose of caring for sick and destitute German pilgrims in a hospital founded at Jerusalem. As that hospital, as well as the adjoining oratory had been dedicated to Mary, these Knights came to be called Marianites.

Although these Knights were not priests, they pronounced the ordinary vows of a Religious Order. From the way and mode that the uttering of these vows took place, and from the ceremonies attending the reception of members into the Order, we may easily discover how deeply they reverenced the Blessed Virgin and how strict were their obligations to serve her in the Order. The master of the Order would propose to the candidate for knighthood the following questions, "Do you swear, beloved brother, by God and the Holy Virgin, to be obedient to your superiors during your whole life? Do you swear, by God and the ever Blessed Virgin, to be pure of heart and to abstain from matrimony? Do you swear to renounce forever all your worldly goods, to serve the Order as one of its own members and to sacrifice your life, if necessary, for the sake of the Holy Land? If you swear to all these things we receive you into the fellowship of our Order, promising you labor and suffering, the poor garb of our community, and bread and water."

What an edifying spectacle these Knightly Orders offer to our view! Manly dignity, masculine beauty, heroic bravery, religious enthusiasm and chaste souls and bodies were their chief characteristics. Whence did they derive all these manly and noble virtues? From those consecrated altars, near which they partook of the Bread of life

and before which they dedicated themselves to the sublime Queen of heaven. When they had received the necessary graces they went forth cheerfully to the battle-field in the distant country, preceded by the standard of the Blessed Virgin, obedient to her call to the defence of the just and the true.

7. FEMALE ORDERS DEVOTED TO CHARITY FOR THE NEIGHBOR.

Amid fallen humanity, both spiritual and bodily misery stalks about under every variety of form. Yet Christian charity, founded in faith and in love for God, knows how to bring help and relief in fully as many heavenly forms. The great Creator has specially endowed the tender soul of woman with a rich fund of compassion, of self-sacrificing and self-forgetting devotedness to suffering and pitiable humanity. But it is only the heart of that woman who has first been deeply imbued with the sublime teachings of religion and impressed with the truths of salvation, that is really capable of such a life of sacrifice and possesses the fortitude necessary to trample under foot the selfishness usually found in the untrained human heart.

If we, as Christians, look with admiration at those noble, daring Knights who, while leading a pure life, devoted all their energies to the service of the destitute, were willing to sacrifice their means and even their blood in the cause of religion, certainly our admiration must be even more fully enlisted for those weak maidens, the Sisters of Charity, who devote themselves and their all to the most heroic works of mercy towards their neighbor.

We live in an age where religious associations are disparaged and calumniated. And, yet, who among infidels

would dare to speak irreverently of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, of the teaching Sisters, or of any one of the many branches of the beloved Sisters of Charity? Listen to the rough but honest soldier: how affectionately he speaks of the hospital Sister, or of "the angel of the battle-field!"

Now where do these self-sacrificing, comforting, loving beings find their model and their strength? Oh, they know of a certain tender, sympathetic, virginal heart, a mother-heart, to which we, the poor, banished children of mother Eve, may turn weeping and hoping in this valley of tears—a heart which we call the refuge of sinners, the comfort of the afflicted, the seat of mercy. When these pious souls have, by their sacred vows, made themselves as much like the Blessed Virgin as possible, they seek at once to imitate that same compassionate Mother in her maternal solicitude and care for the most abandoned children of the human family. Is it any wonder, dear Christian reader, that between such a spouse of Christ and the Mother of Christ there exists a most intimate confidential bond of affection? Can we doubt for a minute that the loving Queen of heaven rewards the sacrifices of these devoted servants, extending to them, too, her special protection, her choicest favors, and a profound joyousness and peace of soul?

CHAPTER II.

Religious Orders that are Consecrated in a Special Manner, by Name and by Duties, to the Blessed Virgin.

ALTHOUGH there has never existed in the history of the Church a Religious Order which was not, by its very nature, founded on the model of the Blessed Virgin's life, and consequently devoted of necessity to the promotion of her honor and glory, there have also existed certain congregations, satellites as it were, which were sometimes called after her and which were, in a special manner, devoted to her service. Hence it is proper that they, too, should find a place in our list of the Servants of Mary.

I. MARY'S SERVANTS OF MOUNT CARMEL.

In the northwestern part of Palestine rises the majestic holy mountain called Carmel, a name which, in our language, means "Garden in the Woods." The base of this mountain consists of chalk and contains a great many caves, to the number of a thousand or more. Here it was that the prophet Elias lived and performed his miracles. Hither, also, in the early ages of the Church, many Christians fled from the temptations of life or from the persecutions of the pagan emperors. The pious empress, St. Helen, planted the cross on the highest point of this

mountain. From these early hermits the great Carmelite Order took its rise, though it was only during the latter half of the twelfth century that it assumed the form of a regular community.

Berthold, a crusader from Calabria, in the heat of battle prayed to God for victory, at the same time vowing to embrace a monastic life. Having won the battle, he laid aside his armor and built, in the year 1156, near the cave of Elias, a hermit's cell, which soon developed into a large monastery. From this beginning the Order in its monastic form spread gradually throughout the different countries of Europe. In the year 1247 the Pope ordered a moderation of the rule which, up to that time, had been one of extreme rigor and severity. He also gave to the Society the name of the "Order of Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel." Very soon afterward an event occurred which showed plainly how pleasing this Confraternity was to the Blessed Virgin, and which, at the same time, rendered the Order of Mount Carmel one of the most renowned in the Church. On the 16th of July, 1251, the Mother of God appeared to St. Simon Stock, who was the Superior General of the Order, and gave to him the Scapular, as a designating badge of the Order and as a pledge of her favor and protection. *

In the course of time several branches sprang from the mother Order. All of these, however, were closely united to each other, and with the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the common bond of the holy Scapular. St. Teresa, who lived in the sixteenth century, was one of the brightest ornaments of the female branch of this Order. She restored much of the severity of the ancient rule.

It may interest you, dear reader, to hear of the present

* Concerning the Scapular Society, see page 311.

condition of that ancient seat of devotion to Mary, and how it has withstood the ravages of time.

Amid all the changes that have come upon the Holy Land in the course of centuries Mount Carmel, which stood forth prominently as the unchanging central point of the surrounding country, has been exposed to the ravages of the elements and to the unsparing hand of the invader. Hence the monastic buildings were time and again destroyed. In the last three quarters of a century they have been razed four times—the last time in the year 1821. A humble friar, called Brother John Baptist from Frascati, was the man of Providence, who, under the special protection of Mary, built the present monastery, having collected in Asia and Europe the sum of 90,000 gulden, which was expended on the work. He made ten journeys from Palestine to the various countries of Europe, succeeding everywhere in inspiring a genuine enthusiasm in favor of the time-honored shrine of Mary on Mount Carmel. He found a friendly reception in the palaces of the great and in the cabins of the poor, among Catholics and Protestants. Poets dedicated their verses to him, painters sent pictures to him, newspaper men recommended his cause in the public journals, ladies sewed and embroidered for him and got up lotteries and concerts for the benefit of his undertaking.

The king of Prussia issued orders enabling Brother John Baptist to travel free on all the public conveyances in the kingdom, in order that he might gather contributions as he saw fit, throughout all the provinces. Hence, in the year 1840, the good Brother was rich enough to finish the monument of Catholic love for the Blessed Virgin.*

* In the year 1848 Abbot Mislin saw, on Mount Carmel, this good Brother John Baptist, then an old patriarch in his seventy-first year.

Christian reader, do you not discover in the oft disturbed, but always restored, sanctuary of Mount Carmel a striking figure of the Catholic Church standing on the rock of Peter, regaining new life and strength from each storm that passes over its indestructible walls?

2. THE CARTHUSIAN ORDER.

This Religious Order, it is true, does not derive its name from Mary, the ever Blessed Virgin, yet there is hardly any other Order in the Church that has imitated our holy Mother in her earthly life as closely as this Order has done. For, while most of the other Orders have more or less devoted themselves to some outward work of honor to God, or of charity to man, as, for instance, to the care of souls, the giving of missions, the direction of schools, the care of the sick or other good works, the Carthusians repudiate such works for themselves in order to give themselves up the more perfectly to God in prayer, meditation, and solitude of life. Hence this order is called specially a contemplative Order. While other Orders resemble the active Martha, the Carthusian, like Mary, sits peacefully at the feet of Jesus and quietly renders praise and homage to the divine Master. "Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke x. 42).

The founder of this exceedingly severe Order was St. Bruno, born in Cologne in the year 1035—a man of great talent, profound and varied knowledge, and amiable character. He took the resolution of renouncing the world and its honors. He relinquished the position of canon in the cathedral at Rheims, and that of teacher and preacher in the renowned school of that city, and with six companions

withdrew into the remote solitudes of a neighboring forest in order to lead a life of prayer and mortification similar to that of the hermits of primitive Christianity.

There was a retired hermitage in the wildest and most barren part of the diocese of Grenoble. But Urban II., the then reigning Pope, who in his youth had sat as a pupil at the feet of St. Bruno, felt that, in his lofty and responsible position as Supreme Pontiff, he needed the counsel of his wise and beloved preceptor. Accordingly he summoned the saint to Rome, and Bruno obeyed. The Pope offered to his old professor the cardinal's hat and the archbishopric of Reggio. Both honors were respectfully but firmly declined by the humble hermit.

In this single act of St. Bruno we may discover the whole character of the Order which he founded, namely, a renunciation of all honors and offices of dignity, perfect solitude, and true love for God. The Order has ever remained firm in its adhesion to its chief object, namely to imitate the silent, solitary life of the holy family in the lowly cabin at Nazareth.

The first chapel erected in the solitary waste of Grenoble was dedicated in March, 1085, by St. Bruno, to the honor of the Blessed Virgin, and was from that time known by the title, "Our Lady of the Cells." It became a place of frequent pilgrimage for persons in search of Christian perfection. It would be difficult to find a sanctuary better adapted by its peacefulness, and its seclusion from the world, for prayer and contemplation. Here, during a long lapse of centuries, the pious monks sang the praises of the Most High. Every night, about 11 o'clock, matins were chanted solemnly, and at such a slow pace that the morning sometimes dawned before the end of the devotion. Beside this duty each monk was expected

to recite the office of the Blessed Virgin every day. Such were the duties of the Carthusian.

Although, on account of its extreme severity, this Order made but slow progress in point of numbers, at the period of its highest success it counted three hundred members. At all times it had among its sons a large number of most devoted servants of Mary.

3. THE ORDER "DE MERCEDE," OR "OUR LADY FOR THE REDEMPTION OF CAPTIVES."

In the year 711 the Moors, a wild Mohammedan tribe from the northern coast of Africa, invaded Spain, and although the Christians of that country defended every mile of territory fiercely, step by step the barbarians succeeded in intrenching themselves firmly in the land, and reduced large numbers of the Christians to the most abject slavery.

The condition of these captive Christians was so excessively wretched, the danger to which they were exposed of losing their faith, and eventually their immortal souls, was so imminent, that every Christian heart was deeply moved with compassion for their sufferings. How much more, then, the compassionate heart of Mary, the help of Christians! Could it be that no one was found to reduce this compassion to practical effect by bringing relief to these poor sufferers?

In the year 1189, in the village of Le Mas de Saintes Puelles, in France, a child was born who received at the baptismal font the name, Peter Nolasco. He was most carefully brought up by his pious parents and trained in early years to the exercise of horsemanship. At the age of 15 he lost his father by death. His mother was most anxious to procure for him a suitable companion in mar-

riage that she might see perpetuated the illustrious families to which her husband and herself belonged. But the young man felt in his soul other aspirations and other imperative demands. It was his greatest pleasure to relieve the poor and to visit the churches, where he would often remain through the whole night assisting at the celebration of the Divine Office.

The sufferings and trials of the Christian captives among the Moors would wring the heart of the sympathetic Peter. He prayed often and fervently for their delivery and for the expulsion of their pagan masters. He took the resolution to expend the whole of his worldly means in redeeming these captives, and also to solicit from other charitable benefactors alms to be devoted to the same purpose.

It pleased the Blessed Virgin to lead her servant thus far and to prepare him thus perfectly, in order then to reveal to him her wishes on this subject. She appeared to him in person and made known to him that it was God's will that he should found a Religious Order, the members of which, beside taking the three usual vows, should bind themselves by a fourth vow to devote their lives to the redemption of Christian slaves. Peter applied to his Confessor for counsel. This was no other than the renowned Raymond of Pennafort, a distinguished professor in the University of Bologna, and at the same time a canon in the cathedral at Barcelona. By a strange coincidence this saint had had the same vision as Peter Nolasco. Both men became convinced that they were bound to follow the injunctions so mysteriously laid upon them. They wished first to apply to the bishop, and to the king, with a view of obtaining their approval. But, lo! the Blessed Virgin had already prepared the

way for them. James, the young king of Aragon, furthered the good work by lending to it his whole royal influence.

Since the year 1192 there had existed in Barcelona an association of pious priests and nobles who made it their duty to visit the captives and to gather means for their ransom. Nearly all the members of this Society united themselves to Peter Nolasco, who gave to the new organization the name, "The Order of Our Lady for the Redemption of Captives."

On the 10th of August, 1217, Peter, together with seven other valiant knights and six devoted priests, pronounced their solemn vows in the cathedral at Barcelona, in presence of the king and his whole court. The Order was approved by Pope Honorius III.

Very soon people of the highest rank, from Spain, France, England, Germany, and Hungary, flocked to the standard of "Our Lady de Mercede." One of the most glorious ornaments of this Order was the great St. Raymond Nonnatus, born in the year 1200, a man who in his holy life became an eloquent example of how the Blessed Virgin cares for her servants and procured suitable members for her "Order for the Redemption of Captives."

4. THE ORDER OF THE SERVANTS OF MARY.

From very early times there existed in the city of Florence a venerable brotherhood known as the Confraternity of the Laudators (Dei Laudesi), whose chief duty consisted in singing in a certain oratory the praises of the ever Blessed Virgin. On the festival of the Assumption of Our Lady, in the year 1233, seven of the principal merchants met for this purpose in the oratory. Animated by a simultaneous and spontaneous inspiration,

these seven servants of Mary resolved to sell all their goods, distribute the proceeds among the poor, and then live themselves afterwards on the alms of the charitable. Bishop Adringo, of Florence, approved their good resolutions and promised to become their protector.

These devout men then repaired to a dilapidated old house beyond the city walls, in the village of Camarsca, where they divested themselves of the judicial robes which they had long worn with honor. In their stead they put on hair shirts, a scanty gray overgarment, and an iron girdle about the waist. This occurred on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, of the same year. The new company chose for their Superior the oldest and most pious of their number, Buonsiglio Monaldi. When they had resolved themselves into a Religious Congregation, they repaired in a body to the bishop, to receive his blessing and further advice and counsel. As they passed through the streets of Florence the neighbors, much surprised at the change wrought in the personal appearance of men but lately so handsomely dressed, cried out, "Ecco i servi della Madonna," that is, "Behold the servants of the Madonna." The cry was taken up and repeated by the little innocent children. Hence the members, thinking they could find no better name, called themselves, from that time, "Servants of Mary," or "Servites."

These pious persons lived for about one year in their first habitation. Then, finding that their abode was too easy of access to visitors and others, they removed, with the consent of the bishop, to the solitude of Monte Senario. There, on the ruins of an old castle they built a chapel, and around it placed their cells in a circle. There they spent their time in chanting the praises of

the Mother of God, sustaining bodily life with roots and herbs. Later on they begged for alms through the streets of Florence.

It is stated that on Good Friday, in the year 1239, the Blessed Virgin appeared in a vision to some members of this pious community and commanded them to make the rule of life by St. Augustine the base of their community observances, and, in remembrance of the sufferings and death of her divine Son, to adopt a black habit.

At the same time she handed to her devoted servants a black Scapular with which they were to invest themselves and others, as a sign of completer dedication to herself and her service. This is the origin of the Scapular of the "Confraternity of the Seven Dolors of Mary." (See page 331).

After Pope Alexander IV. had given his approbation to the Order, in the year 1255, it grew rapidly in numbers, notwithstanding its extreme rigor. The desire to consecrate themselves entirely to the service of the sublime Queen of heaven outweighed, on the part of those seeking admission to its ranks, every fear of a hard and rigorous mode of life. When in the year 1283, seventy-seven years after the founding of the Order, the last of the seven founders died, in the 110th year of his age, the Order numbered more than ten thousand members.

With the main Order there was united a "Third Order of the Servants of Mary," for the benefit of the laity of both sexes, which in course of time numbered thousands of members. As is well known, the foundress of this branch was the illustrious St. Juliana of Falconieri.

5. THE MISSIONARY FATHERS OF LA SALETTE.

This Order was founded in 1852 by Bishop de Bruil-

lard, of Grenoble, France, a few years after the apparition of the Blessed Virgin on the mountain of La Salette, when that apparition had been recognized as authentic by the Church. "These missionaries," said the prelate, "will be called the 'Missionaries of La Salette,' and will be a perpetual remembrance of the merciful apparition of Mary to Maximin and Melanie." Since 1852 these Fathers have had charge of the shrine of Our Lady of La Salette. Their end is to preach missions and retreats, and to make known the teaching of the Blessed Virgin at La Salette. God has abundantly blessed this Order, which was approved by the Holy See by two decrees of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII., the first dated May 27, 1879, the other May 14, 1890. In these decrees the Holy See highly approved the aim and end of the Order and made it a regular institute with the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Order has houses in France, Switzerland and Italy, and has two houses in the United States, one in Hartford, Conn., the other in Fitchburg, Mass.

6. THE LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY.

This Religious Congregation was founded in 1817 by the reverend Father Champagnat, a priest of the diocese of Lyons, France, whose cause of beatification has been formally approved by the Sovereign Pontiff. The Congregation numbers seven thousand Brothers, engaged in the instruction of Christian youth. The foundation of the spiritual progress of its members is laid on fervent devotion and veneration of the glorious attributes of the Immaculate Virgin. The motto of the institute is "To Jesus through Mary." The Brothers in their religious exhortations place special stress on the dignity which God conferred on Mary

by elevating her to the supereminent dignity of Mother of Jesus Christ, and inculcate veneration of Our Lady by the practice of her virtues. To foster this beautiful spirit of devotion, they initiate their pupils into the various sodalities instituted by the Church for the edification of Catholic youth, and by the daily recital of the chaplet in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

The marvellous success and wonderful development of the Congregation can only be attributed to the powerful intercession of her in whose honor and under whose patronage, the holy founder placed his infant community, to perpetuate the glorious work of the apostolic era.

7. CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

This Congregation was founded in Belgium in 1830. In 1887 a new mother-house was established at Oostacker, near the marvellous grotto known as the Flemish Lourdes, and from this circumstance the Congregation received its present name. On his reception into the Congregation, each Brother receives the name of Mary, in addition to his name in religion; he recites daily the office of the apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes, and wears the beads and a medal of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The Congregation is vowed to the Christian education of youth, especially the poor; the care of orphan asylums, the nursing of the sick and of old men in hospitals, and kindred works of charity. The Congregation and its rule are approved by a decree of His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII., dated July 18, 1892. There are no more than three hundred Brothers in the Congregation, laboring in the schools, asylums and other charitable institutions of Bel-

gium and Holland. In the United States, the brothers have a college and a novitiate at Seattle, Wash. They have fitted up a grotto there similar to that at Lourdes, and hope to establish a pilgrimage.

8. THE ORDER OF ST. BRIDGET.

St. Bridget was born in the year 1302. Her parents belonged to the royal house of Sweden. Even in her childhood she was remarkable for a special love for the practice of all religious exercises. Having grown up in innocence and the fear of God, to young womanhood, at the desire of her parents she entered the holy state of matrimony, without ever diminishing her zeal for religion.

Once, when her husband lay grievously sick, Bridget, by her persevering prayers to the Mother of God, obtained his restoration to health. This dangerous illness and its miraculous cure impressed the good husband so forcibly with a sense of the uncertainty of human life that, with the consent of his saintly wife, he betook himself to a Cistercian monastery where he died some years later in the odor of sanctity.

Bridget, being now free, renounced her princely dignity, divided her estate among her children, and sought nothing more ardently than the glorious privilege of becoming a handmaid to the poor. Yet she was not fully satisfied with this mode of imitating the "handmaid of the Lord," the Blessed Virgin, for she also desired that her sublime patroness should be praised and imitated by others.

In order to do all that lay in her power for this object, she founded, in the year 1344, an Order whose purpose should be to honor the Blessed Virgin every day. Accordingly she caused to be built at Wadstena, in the

diocese of Linköping, in Sweden, a large convent which she occupied together with sixty nuns. In another building, some distance away, she placed thirteen priests in honor of the twelve apostles and St. Paul; four deacons to represent the four doctors of the Church, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and St. Jerome; and, finally, eight lay Brothers to take care of the temporal affairs of the institution.

It is the most favorite life-duty of these consecrated souls to honor and glorify the Queen of heaven in the most diverse and even childlike manner. They are present every day at a High Mass celebrated in honor of Mary, after which they are required, by rule, to sing the "Salve, Regina." With the view of maintaining sisterly love and harmony they observe the following beautiful practice: Each day, before Vespers, they repeat solemnly together a "Hail, Mary," at the end of which the head Sister of the choir bows low before the others and says, "If we have offended you by word, action, or sign, forgive us out of love for God and His blessed Mother, for we, too, forgive you from the bottom of our hearts if you have in any way offended us." The second Sister then bows in turn and makes the same request.

In imitation of the poverty and self-denial of Mary these Sisters fast often and strictly, and observe perpetual silence.

This peculiarly formed Order spread rapidly over the countries of northern Europe and brought down from Heaven many blessings upon the members. Branches of this Order of Mary's servants existed also in Germany, France, and England, where they promoted lasting devotion to her. The mother-house at Wadstena was transformed into a young ladies' Protestant school.

9. THE ORDER OF MARY IMMACULATE.

In the court of King John II. of Castile, whose wife was the Princess Elizabeth of Portugal, there lived a young lady named Beatrix, distinguished for her beauty of person and her high qualities of mind and heart. She became the unwilling subject of disputes among the young noblemen of the court, who even fought duels on her account. When the queen heard of these things she imprisoned the young woman for three days and kept her on bread and water. The innocent Beatrix, in this hour of her trouble, had recourse to the loving Mother of Jesus. Recommending her life and her innocence to the care of Mary, she made a vow of perpetual virginity. Then the blessed Mother, clothed in a white robe partially hidden by a blue mantle, appeared to her child, promising her speedy relief. No sooner was she released than she hastened to Toledo, where she entered upon a strict religious life among the Dominican nuns. However, she soon reduced to practice a long cherished desire of founding an Order in honor of the Immaculate Conception. Queen Isabella entered heartily into the plan of Beatrix, placing at her disposal the royal palace at Galliana together with the adjoining chapel of St. Fides. Beatrix, together with twelve other devout young women, took possession of their new religious home in the year 1484. As the habit of her young community she adopted the dress in which the Blessed Virgin had appeared in the vision in the prison, namely, a long white gown and a blue veil or mantle. She added a small white scapular reaching to the waist, and on which she had embroidered in silver an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the parlor-grating, and in all their assemblies, the Sisters

wore above their other habit a large scapular that came down to their feet.

At the request of Queen Isabella the Pope approved the pious Order in the year 1489, gave them the Cistercian rule of life to follow, and imposed on them the obligation of reciting the little Office of the Blessed Virgin every day.

10. THE ORDER OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

A king's daughter and a king's queen, Jane of Valois, born in the year 1464, was the foundress of this community piously dedicated to the honor of the Mother of God.

Jane's father, King Louis XI., had given her in marriage to Louis, duke of Orleans. The latter, on ascending the French throne as Louis XII., discarded his pious wife in order to take for his queen, Anna, the duchess of Brittany, who was the widow of Charles VIII. Jane was banished to Bourges, where she lived in quiet retirement, seeking, in resignation to God's will, consolation in the bitter disgrace to which she was subjected. More especially did she occupy her thoughts in working out a plan whereby she might, by founding an Order in honor of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, give outward and practical expression to her sentiments of love and gratitude for that blessed Mother.

Aided by the counsel and direction of her Confessor, the Franciscan Father, Gabriel Nicolai, Jane reduced her plan to practice and succeeded in carrying out her design. She gathered about her ten young women whom she guided in the paths of sanctity, and in union with them observed strictly a rigorous rule of religious life. This rule, composed by herself, had direct bearing on the ten

principal virtues of Mary which they are obliged to imitate, namely, chastity, prudence, humility, faith, devotion, obedience, poverty, patience, compassion, and the fear of God. Hence it was that the Order and its rule of life came to be called by the name of "The Ten Virtues of Mary."

With much significance the Mother Superior in this Order was always styled "handmaid" in remembrance of the Blessed Virgin's words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." The Order, obtaining in due time the approbation of the Pope, spread rapidly throughout France and Belgium.

II. THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

In the cathedral of Dijon, during the lenten season of 1604, a course of sermons was delivered by a certain preacher who, by his gentle humility and powerful eloquence, had brought some seventy thousand heretics back to the bosom of the one true Church. This great preacher was St. Francis of Sales, bishop of Geneva. One of the most attentive among his listeners was a distinguished lady in deep mourning. This was St. Jane Frances of Chantal. Some four years previously her husband had been accidentally shot, by a friend, while on a hunting-party. These two holy souls, St. Francis of Sales, and St. Frances of Chantal, had never before met each other, yet now each felt that an inward voice, unmistakable in its accents, called them to the united performance of some great Christian enterprise. From that time forward they were bound together by a sacred tie of charity, working and praying for the cause of God and of immortal souls.

As yet Jane Frances was bound to the world by the

tenderest of ties, for she had an aged father and three loving children. But the heroic woman with supernatural courage stifled the voice of nature and obeyed the call from Heaven, though not until, with careful foresight, she had provided for the future maintenance of her three children.

St. Francis of Sales had in contemplation to establish a community of religious women who, though leading a life of retirement in a convent, might at the same time go abroad from the cloister for the purpose of doing good works among their fellow beings. The sublime model that these two devout servants of Mary chose for their Order was Mary herself, who, though she preferred greatly to pass her life in prayer and contemplation in her home at Nazareth, was ready, in obedience to God's call, to forsake her beloved retirement and to hasten over valleys and mountains to visit and to serve her cousin, St. Elizabeth, and to gladden her heart with joyful tidings. Hence it was that the new community was called the Order of the Visitation.

On the 29th of March, St. Jane Frances of Chantal set out from the city of Dijon, arriving, on the 14th of April, at the little village of Annecy, a town prettily situated on a hill on the road leading from Geneva to Chamberry and overshadowed by the towering peaks of Mont Blanc and Mont St. Gothard. Here the bishop of Geneva, St. Francis, had established his episcopal see.

Here, on the 6th of June, 1610, which fell that year on Trinity Sunday, Madame de Chantal, with three companions, began her life of religious retirement. The Order of the Visitation had now entered upon its existence.

For some good reason it became desirable that the members of the new community should lead a strictly

cloistered life, and it was so decreed by a brief of Pope Paul V. in the year 1618.

To-day the Order is widely diffused throughout the Catholic Church, everywhere preserving with the utmost fidelity its original spirit of fervor and strictness. Most of the convents have attached to them an academy for the education of the daughters of the wealthier classes. In this way the Order has rendered incalculable services to both Church and State. The Sisters moreover, are bound by rule to attend choir-service, which consists in the daily recitation of the Office of the Blessed Virgin.

12. THE CONGREGATION OF NOTRE DAME.

Blessed Peter Fourrier, a regular of the Order of St. Augustine, was born at Mirecourt on the 30th of November, 1565. He was not only privately a zealous advocate of Mary through his own personal devotion, but he also founded a religious community, by means of which he might implant in the hearts of future generations the same devotion towards our blessed Lady.

Father Fourrier, being parish priest of Mataincourt, found among his own parishioners a most suitable person to help him reduce his design to practical shape. In the little village of Hymont, within the boundaries of his parish, there dwelt an amiable young woman named Alice, who had been carefully brought up and who possessed fine qualities of soul and body. Her whole life had been blameless in the eyes of man, yet she loved to attend country dances, was fond of fine clothes, and cherished other feminine vanities. Being present one day, with her parents, at a wedding-party where she joined heartily in the dance, she suddenly felt, during the height of the enjoyment and when the music was the liveliest, as if she

saw the evil spirit winding a chain of flowers about all the youthful dancers and drawing them towards himself. At once she was seized with remorse, shame and fear, resolved never again to join a dancing-party, and in the very hour itself secretly uttered a vow of perpetual virginity and gave herself up to God. Henceforth she wore only the plainest and coarsest garments.

She soon found a companion of her own way of thinking in a young woman named Gante André. Both placed themselves under the special guidance of their saintly parish priest who, by his noble example of life, as well as by his sermons, in which he often and effectively spoke of the folly and the fleetness of the things of this world, and of the value of virtues, especially of chastity, exercised a powerful influence over them. Although the young, enthusiastic souls were eager to carry out their desire of establishing a religious community in honor of the Blessed Virgin, their prudent spiritual father subjected them to a long and trying test.

At last, on Christmas day, 1598, Alice and Gante, with two other companions, appeared at Mass clothed in black garments with veils thrown over their heads, as a public sign that they wished to renounce the world.

Soon other young women affiliated themselves to the little society. Refusing all help from their parents, they led a life of much self-denial, supporting themselves by the work of their own hands. Black bread, milk, fruit and herbs composed the meagre fare of these young women, all of whom had been comfortably and even generously brought up. A little straw on the hard ground sufficed for their short night's sleep.

Secular teaching and religious instruction in the course of time formed the chief occupations of the Congregation

of Notre Dame. It was approved by Pope Paul V. in a bull dated February 1, 1615. The blessing of heaven's Queen descended so visibly and effectively on this enterprise devoted to her honor that even in the lifetime of its founders it numbered thirty-three different convents of the Order. Previous to the breaking out of the French Revolution it numbered houses by the hundred. In many cities have these good Sisters trained up generation after generation of young girls to become models of Christian piety and prudence, always, of course, implanting deeply in their tender hearts a solid devotion for their ever blessed Mother.

13. THE ORDER OF NOTRE DAME DE SION.

This Order was founded at Paris by the Rev. Father Theodore Ratisbonne in conjunction with his brother, the Rev. Father Marie-Alphonse, whose miraculous conversion from Judaism by an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Church of St. Andrea delle Fratte, at Rome, on the 20th of January, 1842, made their names known throughout the whole Catholic world. It was introduced in the United States in 1892.

The object of the institute is to give a Christian education to all classes of children, in all countries, and in all languages.

The Religious of Notre Dame de Sion combine this work with that which our divine Lord came on earth to do—striving to effect the conversion of the Jews, for which their prayers, works and sacrifices are daily offered.

CHAPTER III.

Orders or Congregations in North America Specially Devoted to Mary.

Most of the ancient and modern Religious Orders are to be found on the soil of America, all, too, busily engaged in promoting devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. All that the Benedictines have been doing throughout Christendom for the last fifteen hundred years, they are doing now in North America by their teaching, preaching, and edifying lives of self-sacrifice. What has been done in honor of the Mother of God by the Servites, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Augustinians, the Carmelites, the Jesuits, the Lazarists, the Sulpicians, the Redemptorists and others, is well known to Catholics. The institutions of both sexes belonging to these ancient Orders are plentiful in the New World, and as they retain to the full the primitive spirit of their original founders, they necessarily cultivate and spread abroad, beyond their walls as well as within them, a strong and healthful reverence for the Mother of God.

We confine our account here to those more modern Congregations which were either founded in America, or, at least, found here the chief theatre of their admirable work.

I. THE OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE.

Charles de Mazenod, bishop of Marseilles, in France, was the founder of this Order, which assumed, as its chief work, first the instruction of the poor and humble, and the visitation of the prisons, and afterwards the care of foreign missions. Like the Society of Jesus, this Society of Mary placed its members at the disposal of the successor of St. Peter, who thereupon entrusted to their exclusive direction and care immense missionary tracts in several remote quarters of the globe. In North America the Oblate Fathers have several such missions, where, under the protection of the blessed Mother, great progress has been made in the work of saving souls. The Most Rev. Archbishop Bourget, late bishop of Montreal, was the first to call these missionaries to the New World. In the year 1841 they opened a novitiate in Montreal, which in a short time was filled with zealous candidates, some of whom were already ordained priests, others in the act of preparation for that holy state. Bishop Timon, of Buffalo, entrusted to them the care of his seminary and the French congregations of his diocese. In Texas, Bishop Odin commissioned them to establish the College of the Immaculate Conception, which, after being raised in 1857 to the dignity of a university, was relinquished by the Fathers, who did not then consider teaching in such institutions as coming within the scope of their rule. These men then devoted themselves the more zealously to the exclusive work of the missions throughout the different Catholic settlements scattered far and wide over the immense territory of that state. The recently erected diocese of Brownsville owes its existence chiefly to the heroic labors of these inde-

fatigable sons of Mary Immaculate. In the city of Brownsville there are twelve priests of the Order, who direct the Church of the Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph's College, the convent of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, and also attend more than one hundred and fifty Mexican villages in the counties of Cameron and Hidalgo. Another mission of theirs is Rio Grande City, which the Fathers attend, together with the Catholic inhabitants of Rome and San Ignacio, comprising one hundred and ten villages in Hidalgo, Starr, and Webb counties.

Equally edifying and profitable is the good work of these Fathers in the more northern sections: In Lowell, Massachusetts; Buffalo and Plattsburg, New York; Quebec; Montreal, where they have a flourishing novitiate; Rimouski; and Ottawa, where they direct the diocesan seminary and the renowned Ottawa College, to which Pope Leo XIII. has granted the title and all the privileges of a Catholic university.

The grandest field, however, of their missionary industry is that vast region which was erected by the Holy See, on the 22d of September, 1871, into the ecclesiastical province of St. Boniface, and whose five bishops and nearly all the priests are members of the Oblate Society. This province, lying between the United States on the south, the Polar Sea on the north, Hudson's Bay on the east, and the Pacific Ocean on the west, measures fifteen hundred miles in length and the same in breadth. Scattered far and wide through these bleak, icy regions are found roaming hither and thither the last remnants of those once numerous Indian tribes, who have been driven by the European settlers from their old hunting-grounds, and who are now decimated in numbers and strength. Notwithstand-

ing the cruel injustice practised against them, these savages manifest a laudable desire for the blessings of religion. They are deeply impressed with the conviction that the Catholic religion alone possesses the unfailing remedy for healing the inborn infirmities of mankind. Hence Mary, in her compassion for their starving souls, sends among them her brave and faithful sons, who take up their poor and cheerless abodes at those points where the children of the forest most assemble on their return from their hunting expeditions. Here these Oblates of Mary erect their churches, schools, and religious houses though these, for want of means, are not as numerous, influential, effective and permanent as the spiritual wants of the Indian would require. Without assistance from the Mother of God these missionaries could not withstand the hardships and privations which their duties impose on them. In their work in these arctic regions they must not only renounce all the conveniences of civilized life, and begin to ascend the ladder of civilization from its lowest rung, in order to lift these savages from sensuality to religion, but they must also bear the freezing cold of long and severe winters, scarcely tempered by the feeble slanting rays of a polar sun. And even when this tepid sun does shine it gives merely warmth sufficient to render the ice unsafe in crossing stream and lake, yet not enough to dry the snow-soaked earth or to infuse any genial life into frozen nature. The food of the hardy missionary is mainly fish, with no other seasoning than that given to it by a hungry appetite. No bread, no oil, no vegetable, save here and there an aborted potato or half-ripened turnip, not the size of one's finger. These are the only products that the cold, wet earth can bring forth. For months at a time the otherwise active priest

finds himself condemned to utter inaction in the ministry, for it is only during the trading season, when the savages wish to sell their skins and furs, that they gather into the trading-post where the missionary resides.

If compelled sometimes to personally visit his savage children in the season when the earth is buried in ice and snow, he does so with extreme hardship, and even at the peril of his life.

The reader may the better appreciate the state of affairs in those wild districts if he will read what the Right Rev. Vital Grandin, one of these missionary bishops in the colony of the Immaculate Conception wrote to his Superior in the year 1869: "Many of the savages have never yet seen a priest, though there is hardly one of them in the whole territory who is not familiar with the post-traders. Throughout the whole of my vast district not an animal's skin is suffered to go to loss, while immortal souls of men, redeemed, too, by the blood of Christ, perish day by day.

"Our missionaries are not numerous enough to found all the missions necessary, and are devoid of means to maintain them if established. From our savages we can expect no help. They are fully convinced that they pay us a grand compliment when they bring to us their children for us to feed, clothe, and educate them, believing that by this concession of theirs they establish a claim for themselves and a right to the same treatment. Indeed, these poor creatures have no idea of the sacrifice we make by living among them. Poor as we are, in their eyes we are passing rich. When they meet me on a winter visitation and see the woollen blankets in which I have to wrap myself, they exclaim to each other, 'Isn't our bishop rich—he has two fine blankets!'

"Another source of countless troubles is the fact that money has no value with the wild Indians, and we are obliged to supply ourselves with a vast quantity of goods for the purpose of trading with them.

"When we require workmen in the erection of buildings, attendants or guides on our journeys, or help in the houses, our troubles know no end. They help to consume our scanty food, demand exorbitant wages, do as little work as possible and that little very badly. In the first place we must pay them in advance, in order that they may buy clothing for themselves and their families to fit them to appear at their work. Once clothed they soon tire of their work, go away, and are seen no more. Thus, at one time, I was compelled for three months to do the washing for myself, a sick lay Brother and three Indian boys. If we only had lay Brothers enough our temporal cares would be so diminished that we could increase and enlarge our missionary work. The few Brothers who are with us here challenge our extreme love and admiration. These young men, while they have made, and do make every day, the same sacrifices as ourselves, have not the consolations, the credit or the glorious keener incentives that attend an apostolate in the priesthood. From morning till night they are hard at work providing for the bodily wants of the priests, thus having to bear the hardest and least appreciated of the duties of these trying missions. Thus it was that in the lowly cottage at Nazareth St. Joseph toiled with his willing hands, to procure the bodily necessities for the Blessed Virgin and that divine Infant, whose place the poor missionary endeavors to take among the unenlightened, when announcing to them the truths of the gospel of Christ."

2. THE CONGREGATION OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

This is another association of priests, which although not bearing the name of Mary, has for one of its main objects the diffusion among men of love and reverence for the holy Mother of God. Founded in Rome by Canon Caspar del Bufalo, a zealous priest who died in the odor of sanctity in the year 1837, the Congregation of the Precious Blood spread so rapidly that in the year 1830 it had one hundred and fifty branch establishments in Europe, Asia and Africa. In the year 1843 the Rev. Francis de Sales Brunner came to Cincinnati with eight missionary priests and six novices, and settled in Norwalk, Ohio. They were followed, one year later, by the Sisters of the Precious Blood, who, since the year 1833 had gathered in community life with the mother of the same Father Brunner, at Lowenberg, in the canton of Grisons Graubundten, in Switzerland.

Mass was celebrated in this religious colony in America for the first time at midnight on Christmas eve. On account of this event the members called their little convent "Mary of the Manger." So rapidly did they grow in numbers that the Superiors were soon enabled to found branch establishments, and in the year 1862 they numbered four hundred Sisters. In a few years, in a region of some five-and-twenty miles in length, and of unequal breadth, they had numerous churches, chapels, schools and convents—so that the Most Rev. Archbishop Purcell used to call this part of the country the Thebais of the New World. At last reports the number of priests was about forty.

For all these bountiful blessings the Brothers and Sisters of the Congregation of the Precious Blood are

profoundly grateful to their heavenly Mother. To show their appreciation of her invaluable aid, they have given her name to each of their establishments. The admirable spirit in which these Religious—Fathers, Brothers and Sisters—work for the glory of God and the honor of His blessed Mother is touchingly portrayed in a biographical sketch, written by the reverend founder, of the best and truest of his disciples. Of this saintly member, Father Willibald Willi, who died in St. Mary's Home on the 15th of December, 1854, too early in life for this world, but not too soon for heaven, the writer says: "As a true child of Mary he cherished the most tender love for that Mistress of God's treasury of graces, the Mother of the Most High. He lost no opportunity to advance her honor. In the confessional, in his public discourses, and in his casual conversations, he labored to win for her zealous reverers and faithful imitators. All this he did so unassumingly, so quietly, so prudently, and so carefully within the bounds of holy obedience to his Superiors, never saying or doing too much or too little, that it seemed that he had hardly any part in all the good that he accomplished, most of which indeed, was often attributed to others. Of the unbounded reverence and love which Father Willibald entertained for Mary in his very infancy, in his childhood and in his early manhood, volumes might be written. But in order to be as brief as possible, I shall merely mention a few incidents here and there in his later life. Being ordained priest towards the end of January, he joyfully prepared himself most assiduously and scrupulously so as to be able to celebrate his first Mass on the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. His great love for her who is full of grace impelled him, with the permission of his Superiors, to go on a pilgrimage of forty-five miles

to a chapel in which our blessed Lady is revered under the title of 'The Sorrowful Mother at the Sepulchre,' there to offer up for the first time in his life the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Our Lord. Three miles from that chapel, at Mary Camp, he had previously visited a shrine, dear to his heart, that of Our Lady of Good Counsel. Before his departure for America he was in the habit of making frequent pilgrimages, not only to the shrine of Our Lady of Mercy on the lofty mountain of Citailly, and to the chapel of the Mother of Sorrows in his own native village of Ems, but also to the celebrated sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace at Einsiedeln.

"Deeply impressed with the solemn truth that a man's salvation depends very much on his choice of a state of life, he was desirous of ascertaining as correctly as possible in these sanctuaries, where grace and light are so abundantly shed on pilgrim souls, the correctness of his own vocation in life. It was at the shrine in Einsiedeln that he heard for the first time the call of God, summoning him to the holy priesthood. Then it was that he determined his future course of life and resolved to enter the Congregation of the Precious Blood, to consecrate his whole life to missions in foreign lands, and to win to his heavenly Mother reverent children. It was near a sanctuary of Mary that he bade farewell to father, and mother, brothers and sisters in order to find in Mary alone spiritual father, mother and brethren. The festival of the Assumption in the year 1850 was a day of sadness for his family, but for his own soul a day of indescribable happiness. While his friends were in tears at his departure, peace and resignation beamed calmly from his countenance. It seemed as if he was listening to the voice of Mary repeating the words once uttered by the

Almighty to Abraham, 'Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee' (Genesis xii. 1). Passing through Paris he visited the Church of Our Lady of Victories, where he dedicated himself anew to the pure and sacred heart of Mary and earnestly besought the Lord to grant him, through the intercession of that blessed Mother, all the graces necessary to enable him to do the divine will of Heaven in all things. While crossing the Atlantic, in company with some thirty other persons, all destined for a religious life in America, he waited upon them in their sea-sickness, encouraged them, anticipated their wishes, seeming to be entirely forgetful of himself and his own wants.

"On reaching America he was sent to the priests' house of St. Mary of the Angels in Thompson. There he utilized every moment of his time, applying himself, under obedience to his Superiors, to study and prayer, patiently awaiting his call to receive Holy Orders. While there, too, our lamented Willibald had recourse to the Queen of angels, who is the Seat of Wisdom in that institution. He placed his future destiny unconditionally in her hands. It would appear, too, that the Lord Himself was well pleased with this resolution of Father Willibald. For as of old He was pleased at the prayer of Solomon, who preferred Heaven's gift of wisdom before all worldly goods, so, in this instance, the young priest seemed to be providentially endowed with the gifts of wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Again, when he was sent by his Superiors to found a new monastery, the very reflection and knowledge that he had to begin his work in extreme poverty gladdened his heart. He said it seemed to him as if he was permitted to dwell in

the lowly cottage of the Mother of Jesus at Nazareth. Hence he called his new religious house, 'St. Mary's Home.'"

Among the laity dwelling in that modern Thebais in Ohio, devotion to the Blessed Virgin has brought forth abundant fruit. In every family throughout the mission "The Glories of Mary," by St. Alphonsus, is a favorite book. The Rosary is recited in the family circle every day. The chapels are crowded every evening. In the depth of the coldest winter may be seen lines of lanterns glimmering through the darkness of the early morning, as the faithful pick their way over the most wretched of roads to the "break-of-day" Mass and the first Rosary. All are enrolled in one or more of the Confraternities of the Blessed Virgin. "Our people," once remarked a devoted priest of that region, "would almost think it a mortal sin to omit the Rosary on Sundays or festivals." It is indeed the Blessed Virgin's land. The whole district resounds with St. Bernard's cry, "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary."

3. THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS.

What the Congregation of the Precious Blood is engaged in doing for the Catholic people in the humbler walks of life, especially among the Germans, is being done for the English-speaking people and the educated classes by the Congregation of the Holy Cross. This Congregation, founded in France in the year 1834, and approved by Pius IX. in the year 1856, embraces two departments, namely, the priests of the Holy Cross and the Josephites, or lay Brothers. The Marianites, or Sisters of the Holy Cross, were originally very closely united to the Order also. In the year 1842, at the invitation of

Bishop de St. Palais of Vincennes, these Religious came to Indiana, where they settled in St. Joseph's county, about thirty miles south of Lake Michigan. Here a tract of land had been secured years before by the proto-priest of the United States, Father Badin. His efforts, however, had only been crowned by the erection of a little log church and a poorer log house. The situation is one of extreme beauty, though not of grandeur, for northern Indiana can claim nothing of the sublime or grand in her scenery.

Yet the monotony of the lowland is frequently diversified by the clear, placid little lakes surrounded by gently undulating plains. The farm in question contained two of these pleasant lakes, to which Indian tradition had attached many a tale of enchantment.

Dedicating this spot to "Our Lady of the Lake," Father Sorin, the pioneer of the Order in America, selected a charming little island in the largest lake as the site for two novitiates: one for the priests he hoped to train for his new mission, and the second for the Brothers. A beautiful situation was also chosen on the banks of the lake for the future college. Then, with a firm confidence in divine Providence, putting his trust in Mary, Father Sorin passed the first winter in collecting the scattered Catholics of the neighborhood into a regular congregation, in forming the novitiate of the Brothers, and in attending to the temporal wants of his little colony.

At this period the aid so long and earnestly desired by this devoted missionary was found in the person of his former beloved friend, the young Father Cointet, who was indeed another true servant of Mary, for in his youth he had made this rule of life; "I will give up some time every day to reading holy books. Out of love for Mary I shall

recite the Rosary every day. Since an early age I have been consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, and to her care I have confided my chastity. I will study attentively the virtues of this holy Mother, to whom I am strictly bound to have many traits of resemblance, and towards whom I ardently desire to feel all the tenderness of a true child."

Thus, then, in holy poverty, and in love to Mary, these two priests laid the foundation of the University of Notre Dame and all the offshoots and institutions that have sprung from it.

How apostolic their lives were, the following words of Father Sorin will tell: "For some years the wardrobe of Father Cointet and his Superior was considered very full when they possessed a pair of boots and a hat as property in common. The boots he adroitly managed not to wear until they had passed through the stages of good and indifferent, but the hat could not be so easily managed, there being no alternative except to replace the biretta by the beaver, when on the mission. Accordingly, if Father Cointet was recognized riding or walking off with a hat on his head, it was known to all the members of the little community that the Superior was at home."

As Notre Dame now stands it holds in various establishments, circling the pleasant waters of the lake, the University of Notre Dame, with about fifty professors and more than five hundred pupils and a school for manual labor, conducted by the Brothers, with fifty apprentices or novices. St. Mary's Academy of the Immaculate Conception, one mile westward, is the mother-house of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. It counts eight hundred Religious. The number of pupils attending the academy is about one hundred and ninety. There are, too, in the diocese of

Fort Wayne, twelve other schools directed and taught by these Sisters, while the lay Brothers of St. Joseph have several schools and colleges in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Texas.

Of all these religious homes and pious families Mary is the Mother to whose special protection they were solemnly dedicated from the beginning. As a sign of this we see elevated one hundred and ten feet in the air, on the dome of the university building, the statue of the "blessed among women," upon her lofty brow a crown of electric stars. From the same height in the church spire every hour, peals forth the music of sweet-voiced bells reminding, by their harmonious tones, the reverers of Mary of their beloved Mother. The chief among these chimes, named St. Mary, is one of the largest in the United States, weighing seventeen hundred pounds. Thus Mary presides over her favored colony. She looks with love upon the apprentices of the school for manual labor, in their different workshops and in the fields, on the Brothers in their quiet novitiate and on the Seminarians in their solitude of prayer and study. Off a mile to the west her motherly eye rests benignantly upon the institutions of the Sisters of the same Order, under the title of St. Mary's of the Immaculate Conception. The Catholic pupils of the academy are enrolled in the Sodality of the Children of Mary and the Living Rosary. Every Saturday evening the litany of Loretto is chanted in the conventual churches and chapels. The Catholic students of the university have an Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the members of which attend a special Mass and hear a special sermon every week. The Month of Mary is here made a glorious continued festival of thirty-one days at both institutions. Benediction of

the Blessed Sacrament is given every evening and a discourse is pronounced by one of the reverend Fathers in honor of the heavenly Queen.

The feast of the Assumption is annually celebrated by a solemn procession after High Mass or Vespers. On that day every picturesque spot is adorned with some memento of the Queen of heaven. Arches ornamented with her image point out the way to the pious pilgrims. The murmuring waters of the lake, the songs of the birds, and all the pleasant sounds of midsummer in the green woods, together with the chimes of twenty-one bells in the church-tower, unite to form a triumphal accompaniment to the happy voices of the children of Notre Dame, as they intone the litany of Loretto, the "Magnificat," or the "Salve, Regina."

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin may truly be said to be the presiding spirit of the place. Private chapels in her honor are to be found in every house. The grounds are adorned with statues of the Madonna and Child, and of the Immaculate Conception. As a crowning tribute to the Queen of heaven, an exact fac-simile of the famous grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes has lately been completed at a great expense. It stands within a stone's throw of the portals of the university, and is a favorite place of pilgrimage for students and professors.

In the conventual church is the altar of the Seven Dolors, which is a fine group of statuary representing the body of our blessed Lord taken from the cross and laid in the arms of His Mother. A magnificent stained window above the main altar represents the Assumption.

In every direction the spirit of Mary seems to breathe an influence. The full ecclesiastical year should be passed at Notre Dame in order to understand how every

festival of the Blessed Virgin brings some new and touching evidence of the love which the Congregation of the Holy Cross bears to Our Lady, and which it seeks to instil into the hearts of its pupils.

On a beautiful little promontory, opposite the university, the zeal of the Superior has caused to be erected a chapel dedicated to "Our Lady of the Angels." Here until recent years, the Catholic pupils spent one night of every month in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. This chapel is built on the exact plan of the celebrated chapel of "Our Lady of the Angels," sometimes called the Portiuncula, at Assisi, in Italy. It has been enriched by the Holy See with all the privileges of that world-renowned pilgrimage established by St. Francis of Assisi.

At St. Mary's of the Immaculate Conception, the resience of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, one mile west of Notre Dame, the duplicate of the "Santa Casa," or Holy House of Loretto, has been erected as the special chapel of the Children of Mary. This chapel has also been enriched by the Holy See with all the indulgences belonging to the famous pilgrimage of Loretto in Italy.

These two chapels bring to our own land the two most famous shrines of Italy and are most powerful means, in the hands of the Religious, of promoting in the hearts of the youth entrusted to their care a deep and abiding love for the blessed Mother of God.

For many years past there has been published at Notre Dame a weekly magazine, of thirty-two pages octavo, and widely and favorably known throughout the length and breadth of the land as "The Ave Maria." It has received the approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff and fifty-eight archbishops and bishops, and by its excellently written articles has been productive of much good.

Branches of the Congregation have opened schools and new missionary houses in the dioceses of New Orleans, Cincinnati, Chicago, Milwaukee, Fort Wayne, and Galveston, while Montreal, Canada, possesses the provincial house of "Our Lady of the Snows," with forty priests, twelve scholastics, fifty Brothers and eighteen novices. There are also two colleges in Canada under their direction and a third in the diocese of New Brunswick, at the episcopal city of St. Johns. The Sisters of the Holy Cross are the most numerous, for, beside being employed in goodly numbers in all the above-named places, they have also schools and hospitals in Maryland, Washington, Indiana, Idaho, Ohio, Utah, Illinois, California, and Texas.

4. THE SOCIETY OF MARY (MARIST FATHERS).

The Society of Mary arose, at the opening of this century, as a remedy against some of the spiritual ills resulting from the French Revolution. Its cradle was the city of Lyons, France, where its founder, Father Colin, first gathered his band of missionaries, and trained them to scour the poor country districts around, reviving the wounded faith, teaching anew the doctrine of life, and mending the universal moral mischief that prevailed.

Pius VII. blessed the infant community in 1821. By a laudatory brief dated April 29, 1836, Gregory XVI. formally approved and established it. At last, after years of experiment and consequent modification of the rule, Pius IX. in February, 1873, sealed with his supreme authority and fixed forever the final constitution of the new organization.

The name of the Society suggests its end: self-sanctification and the salvation of souls after the model and under the guiding protection of the Mother of God. Hence the

hidden life is the Marist ideal, not the inactive, contemplative life; for the Marist has in hand the apostolic work both of college education and of pastoral and mission care. In this labor he leans with special devotion towards the Holy See, and studies ever to move with the greatest respect for episcopal authority, while the absence of distinctive dress helps to make him more nearly one with the diocesan clergy.

America has seen a quick growth of the Society. In 1863 a parish was accepted in Louisiana; in 1864 Jefferson College, also in Louisiana, was included, and the next year a second parish, St. Mary's, Algiers. New England was then tried, and in 1882 the Society undertook mission work at Lawrence, Mass., and two years later a mission house in Isabella Street, Boston, as well as a third in Van Buren, Maine. Late in 1885 the Bush Street Church, San Francisco, was started and was followed in the succeeding fall by that of Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minn. A third college came under the Marist direction in 1889, that of All Hallows, Salt Lake City. A house of studies and noviceship was canonically erected at Dodon, Md., in 1890, and a second placed in 1892 beside the Catholic University of America, to which it is affiliated. In 1897 two new parishes were opened in Georgia, in Brunswick and in Atlanta. Thus, counting the house in Mexico and the two colleges in South America, the Society has in the Western Continent no fewer than eighteen foundations, manned by a force of ninety professed members.

But it has besides many houses in other lands; notably in France, and in the British Islands, Belgium, Australia, and New Zealand. Some of the South Sea groups are evangelized by Marists. In Futima, one of the smaller isles, Father Chanel was martyred in 1841.

He was solemnly beatified in 1889. Four Marist bishops and about two hundred priests are working among the islanders of the Southern archipelago.

The Society appears indeed to be acknowledged and blessed by her whose name it bears, and without noise or display continues, with divine help, its providential work among the nations.

5. THE BROTHERS OF MARY.

Side by side with all these associations stands worthily and honorably the Congregation of the Brothers of Mary, whose members honor as their founder the venerable Father William Joseph Chaminade, honorary canon of the Metropolitan Church of Bordeaux, a saintly priest, who died in 1850.

Driven from his home by the French Revolution, he was kneeling one day before the miraculous image of Mary in a celebrated place of pilgrimage at Saragossa in Spain. As he prayed he felt himself inspired to make a promise that he would, in the hope of restoring religion in France, found a Society in honor of the Immaculate Conception, the members of which were to devote themselves to the instruction of youth, especially of the poorer classes. Soon after his return to Bordeaux a Sodality of young people was formed, of all conditions in life, who were to make it their study to revive Catholic faith and practices by the frequent reception of the sacraments, by childlike devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and by mutual encouragement and support among all true children of Mary. This Sodality, which still exists, was the preparatory school for the promised Congregation of the Brothers of Mary. Its rules and practices are still those laid down

and prescribed by its worthy founder. The lives of the members are practical evidence of their adherence to his favorite counsel, namely, " Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the altar and reverence for Mary shall constitute the prominent characteristics of the Brothers of Mary." Beside the daily recital of the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary they recite special prayers at different hours of the day and night. Long before the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was promulgated as an article of faith, these pious Brothers used to pray every evening as follows : " With transports of joy we embrace a state of life where everything is done under thy protection, and every one engages himself to praise thee, to serve thee, to publish thy greatness and to defend thy Immaculate Conception."

Under the protection of the zealous bishops of France, who soon learned to appreciate the valuable services of the Society, it grew rapidly, receiving in 1839 a letter of commendation from, and in 1865 the full approbation of the Apostolic See. Meanwhile its branches had spread throughout France, into Alsace, Lorraine, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The first colony came to America in 1849, chiefly through the kind offices of the great missionary, Father Wenninger. After remaining for a short time in Cincinnati they removed to Dayton, where they now have their mother-house, novitiate and postulate, together with a very flourishing high school for boarders. Beside these they have in the United States thirty-two establishments, in which they impart instruction, and encourage reverence for Mary in the hearts of more than ten thousand pupils. Their principal houses, outside of Dayton, are in San Antonio, the Sandwich Islands, Cincinnati, Alleghany, Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Rochester, Pittsburg, San Francisco and New York.

The Blessed Virgin Mary has visibly protected this Society, and all the members deeply appreciate her maternal goodness, and foster the fond hope of always faithfully serving her and her divine Son, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IV.

Mary's Female Orders and Congregations in America.

The Teaching Orders.

1. THE CONGREGATION OF NOTRE DAME OF MONTREAL.

The first female association in America that labored to train up daughters of Mary, was that of the Sisters of Notre Dame of Montreal. Even during the lifetime of its foundress, the venerable Margaret Bourgeoys, this Congregation of our beloved Lady counted eight flourishing establishments. To-day it forms one of the brightest ornaments of the Church in Canada and the Eastern States. In fifty-six separate missions, six hundred Sisters are engaged in training more than fifty thousand children in the knowledge and love of Mary, and of her divine Son.

2. THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME.

In November, 1840, there came eight Sisters of Notre Dame from Namur in Belgium, to Cincinnati. They were the spiritual daughters of the Venerable Mother Julie Billiart, whose process of canonization is now pending at Rome.

The Venerable Mother Julie founded the institute of

the Sisters of Notre Dame at Amiens, France, in 1803; but in January, 1809, she took up her permanent residence in the convent of Namur, which has been recognized as the mother-house to this day. The Venerable Mother Julie is termed in the Roman decree of beatification, "an admirable laborer in the Lord's harvest." She was born at Cuvilly, in the old province of Picardy on the 12th of July, 1751, and she died at Namur on the 8th of April, 1816, when, after sixty-five years of incessant toil and patient suffering in God's work for the sanctification of souls, she was called to continue in heaven the hymn of praise to her benign Creator, which her whole life had sung to Him on earth.

The primary object of her Congregation was the salvation of the souls of poor children. The deplorable state of religious education in France at that time soon determined Mother Julie, however, to modify the original plan, so as to allow of opening schools for the rich as well as for the offspring of poverty. Her master-mind stamped this part of her work with a character distinctly its own. Nearly a century has passed since the foundation of their institute, but the Sisters of Notre Dame are still faithful to the fundamental principle of their venerable foundress, both in their own daily life and in the training of youth, *i. e.*, simplicity, which Mother Julie held to be the basis of genuine culture and true character.

In 1844, twenty-eight years after the death of Mother Julie, the Rule and Constitution of the Sisters of Notre Dame received the formal approbation of the Holy See, and in 1889, seventy-three years after her life on earth had come to a happy close, Pope Leo XIII. honored the heroic servant of God with the title of "Venerable." The tomb of the venerable foundress, which is in the chapel

of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in the grounds of the mother-house of Namur, is constantly visited by numerous pilgrims, who come to venerate the precious remains.

As soon as the Sisters arrived in Cincinnati they began without delay the exercise of their religious mission by laying the foundation of a broad and intellectual Catholic education, whose beneficent influence has radiated from North to South, from shore to shore of this great land of liberty, blessing millions of souls for upwards of fifty-seven years. The first house occupied as a convent by the Sisters in Cincinnati, nearly opposite the old cathedral (now St. Xavier's Church), was soon found too small for the rapidly-growing wants of the community, for which reason a large house and garden located on Sixth Street was purchased. This property was subsequently enlarged and greatly improved.

The foundation of the Congregation of Notre Dame in America has prospered beyond the most cherished hopes. High and low-born, rich and poor pupils, girls from every walk in life have benefited by this holy institute. Classes for those unable to pay their tuition were opened simultaneously with a boarding-school, and the pious and devoted Religious—true followers of the meek and humble Saviour—were soon delighted to see that the pupils in the parochial schools surpassed in number those of the academy. This free school has developed into the present St. Xavier Girls' Parochial School, which has been taught gratuitously by the Sisters of Notre Dame for more than half a century. In the course of years, twelve other parish schools were opened in the city, and are conducted by the Sisters to this day; a school in which deaf-mutes are instructed in the ordinary branches of education was opened in 1889, in con-

nection with the Sixth Street Academy. There are in Cincinnati to-day three flourishing academies under the direction of the Sisters, and devoted to the higher education of girls—one at the Sixth Street convent, another at Court and Mound Streets, and the third on East Walnut Hills. The latest and most important foundation is the convent on Grandin Road, East Walnut Hills, commonly known as "Our Lady's Summit." It is destined to serve the triple purpose of a novitiate or training house for postulants and novices, a home for invalids and superannuated Sisters, and a select day-school or academy. The boarding-school for young ladies at Mt. Notre Dame, near Reading, a village nine miles north of Cincinnati, is one of the most famous institutions of its kind in the United States.

Schools and academies were later founded in other parts of the state of Ohio, notably in Toledo, Dayton, Hamilton, Chillicothe and Columbus. The houses in Toledo and Chillicothe have been abandoned.

In 1843, a colony of six Sisters of Notre Dame, accompanied by the famous Jesuit missionary, Father de Smet, left the mother-house in Belgium for the United States to take charge of the Indian schools in Oregon. Seven other Sisters followed them to the same arduous field of labor under the care of Bishop Blanchet, in 1846. The Sisters labored several years among the Indians and half-breeds, amid the greatest hardships and dangers, until 1851, when, at the request of the bishop of San Francisco, they were transferred to San José. Their efforts in the mission of San José were attended with the most gratifying success, and several foundations in California attest to-day the excellent results of the change.

According to their official data, the Sisters of Notre Dame now have forty flourishing foundations or religious houses in the United States, located in Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Washington, D. C., Rhode Island and California. Of these foundations, the most prominent are the houses in Cincinnati, Boston, Waltham, Mass., Philadelphia, San José and San Francisco.

In their convents, schools and academies they have under their direction 25,074 parish scholars, 2474 boarding and day scholars, 13,218 Sunday scholars, 22,089 sodalists, 1213 Sisters, and altogether, as these statistics at the close of the year 1896 show, not less than 63,167 souls have directly felt the exalting, ennobling and beneficent influence of the training and example of these humble and self-sacrificing servants of Mary.

One of the fairest gems in the crown of good deeds that encircles their honored name is the Tabernacle Society, branches of which have been established and are flourishing in their convents at Philadelphia, Pa., Boston, Mass., San José, Cal., Cincinnati, Dayton and Columbus, O. This pious Association is a league of worshippers of the Eucharistic God, of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar, and its special purpose is to furnish gratuitously to poor churches the requisites for divine service, suitable vestments and adornments for the sanctuary. The good that is accomplished by these Tabernacle Societies is of incalculable value to poor churches, and of vast benefit to poor missionaries, while at the same time it has been a most powerful means of intensifying and propagating devotion to the Blessed Sacrament among the people.

True to their name and spirit, the Sisters of Notre Dame are everywhere foremost in promoting devotion to the

blessed Mother of God, while possessing an acknowledged reputation for the correct and perfect training of youth. Coeval with every foundation of the Sisters of Notre Dame we find in them "The Children of Mary," the "Holy Maternity Sodality," the "Confraternity of the Rosary" and the "Confraternity of the Holy Family," varying with the age, needs or tastes of members, and meeting at stated periods to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. To the usual devotions, lectures and short addresses are added in preparations for great festivals, besides special novenas, which are the occasion of exhortations from eloquent pulpit-orators on the exhaustless theme of Mary's virtues and prerogatives.

Another branch of the Sisters of Notre Dame came to the United States in 1874, from Cœsfeld, Germany. These Sisters have their mother-house in Cleveland, O., and have establishments in the dioceses of Cincinnati, Cleveland and Covington. They number about three hundred professed Sisters.

3. THE SCHOOL SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME.

In the year 1847 four school Sisters of Notre Dame arrived from Munich, Bavaria, in Baltimore, to take charge of the school attached to the then recently established Church of St. James. In the following year, Right Rev. Dr. Henni, first archbishop of Milwaukee, on his way to the Eternal City, called at Munich on King Louis, of Bavaria. The bishop's wish to have a branch of the Bavarian school Sisters in his episcopal city, was met by the king's promise to pay for the first house they would occupy in Milwaukee. With the approval of the Mother General, Sister Mary Caroline Friess set out from

Baltimore, and, after a very long and difficult journey arrived in Milwaukee a few days before Christmas, 1850.

The little band of pioneer Sisters received a most cordial welcome from the noble-hearted bishop. On a gently sloping hill between Lake Michigan and the Milwaukee River, where a fine prospect is afforded of the whole city of Milwaukee, there stood a two-story brick house that once belonged to a Presbyterian minister. This house and lot, together with two lots adjoining, the bishop purchased for the use of the newly-arrived Sisters, and paid for it with the king's money.

Under the prudent management of their beloved Superioress, and the spiritual and temporal guidance of their excellent Father Confessors, first Father Anton Urbanek and then, after the year 1858, Father Francis X. Krautbauer, afterwards bishop of Green Bay, the little colony of school Sisters throve and prospered from year to year, buying up lot after lot of adjoining ground until the whole block, containing an area of more than two acres, became the property of the Sisters.

As the number of boarders increased at the institute, as well as the number of pupils in the day-schools, it became necessary to cover the whole block with spacious buildings. The visitor now sees before him the main front of the institute, 365 feet in length, on Milwaukee Street. There are at present, including the Eastern Province, 2585 Sisters and 235 candidates, all claiming this as their principal mother-house.

From this nursery of piety and learning hundreds of Sisters go forth annually to teach in their several institutes, academies and high schools 2712 young ladies, in their orphan asylums 2536 fatherless and motherless little ones, and in their 231 parish schools 75,318 school children.

4. THE SISTERS OF THE VISITATION.

The Sisters of the Visitation of Mary have exhibited in America a similar rapidity of growth and an equally untiring activity. This Order, first founded by St. Francis de Sales, was established in America by Dr. Leonard Neale, the second archbishop of Baltimore. When in charge of souls at Philadelphia, Father Neale felt the necessity of having an Order of religious women to teach the rising female generation their duty to God, and love for Mary. The providence of God so directed things that in the year 1805 he was able to begin in Georgetown a house of the Order of the Visitation. In the year 1816, when coadjutor to Archbishop Carroll, he received the vows of the first thirteen Sisters, and placed over them as Superioress the prudent, gentle and saintly Sister Mary Theresa Lalor. The bishop would have been glad to bring from the parent house of this Order in Europe, a colony of the older Sisters to train and form his youthful aspirants, but the money being wanting, he had to be satisfied with the written rule. It was only in 1829 that three Sisters came at last from France to Georgetown. Having remained three years and discharged the object of their mission, these visiting Sisters returned home to report that the spirit of St. Francis de Sales and the heart of St. Jane Frances de Chantal pervaded the American branch of their Order. Some five years previously the poverty of the Sisters was so embarrassing that it seemed that they must disband. Indeed, this sad measure was decided upon and about to take place, when God sent them most unexpected and opportune assistance. To-day the Sisters of the Visitation own some of the most successful seats of learning in the

Eastern States, and their duties lie chiefly among the daughters of the better classes of society. The diocese of Baltimore has five convents; St. Louis has two with over sixty-four members; Wheeling three, with seventy-eight members; Brooklyn two, with fifty members; Covington two, while Mobile, Dubuque, Richmond, St. Paul, Tacoma, Hastings, and Wilmington have each one prosperous community.

5. THE SISTERS OF LORETTO, OR FRIENDS OF MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.

Among the many forms of devotion to the august Queen of heaven, none seems of a more attractive character in this world of misery, than devotion to her dolors. She is of our race and nature; her human woes during a prolonged life of trial, appeal to our hearts and engage our sympathies with the irresistible force of a subject clearly understood, while the climax of her sorrow, as she stands beneath the gibbet of ignominy, whereon her divine Son is expiring, lifts her far above our region of possible suffering, and enthrones her Queen of martyrs. Standing there on the desolate hill of Calvary, this noble woman accepts us for her children, and deigns to love us as the legacy left by her beloved Son. Those who weep have now a comforter forever more.

A fervent apostle of this devotion to our sorrowful Mother was the Rev. Charles Nerinckx, a missionary from Flanders, who came to America early in the nineteenth century. A voluntary exile from his native land, where a hostile government would not allow him to exercise the functions of his priestly office, he was content

to toil among the pioneers of rude, western settlements, and look to Heaven for his reward.

Father Nerinckx arrived July 2, 1805, at the house of Rev. Stephen Badin, the only priest then in the lonely district of central Kentucky. Years of hard, unsatisfactory labor followed. Both holy men saw it would be impossible to train the rising generation without good, Catholic schools, and some permanent arrangement for their maintenance, but alas! what prospect was there for such a thing, where men had to struggle for the bare necessaries of life? With his accustomed piety, Father Nerinckx placed the matter in Our Lady's hands. But the hour of Providence had not struck and these pious hopes and fervent prayers were seemingly in vain.

It was not until 1812 that Misses Mary Rhodes, Anne Havern and Christine Stuart banded themselves together as teachers for the little girls of the neighborhood; they were soon joined by Misses Anne Rhodes and Nellie Morgan, as fellow-laborers. These young ladies had enjoyed the advantages of a Christian education in their Maryland homes, and grieved to see their little relatives and friends deprived of so great a blessing. They determined, as far as lay in their power, to supply this need. They dwelt together in a small log cabin, near Hardin's Creek, Marion county, Ky., and opened their school, with their holy pastor's blessing; they soon applied to him for a rule by which to guide their own daily lives and devotions, at which request hope lighted a tiny flame in the earnest missionary. Could they not become Religious, and repeat our holy Mother's life of poverty, chastity and obedience? Happy in the thought that he dared not mention to the youthful candidates until he had consulted Right Rev. B. J. Flaget, then bishop of Ken-

tucky, his mind was made up, in case his petition found favor, to call this religious body of American origin by some favorite title of God's Virgin Mother, and perpetuate, in this new diocese, a special devotion to Mary at the foot of the cross. The zealous bishop was delighted and accorded all the permission within his power to grant to Father Nerinckx, encouraging him to push forward a good work that seemed to promise so much for the salvation of souls. The humble recluses in the little log cabin were happy beyond words at this realization of their own secret hopes, and accordingly the three oldest postulants were clothed with the habit and veil of religion, April 25, 1812, in St. Charles' Church, Marion county, Kentucky, before a crowd of spectators, who gathered from all sides to witness so solemn a ceremony, performed for the first time in these western wilds. The new Order was called "Loretto" or "Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross," and every hour Sisters and pupils still repeat, "O Suffering Jesus! O Sorrowful Mary!"

The little mustard seed took root; its branches spread to many states. Like the star of empire, so did the star of Loretto move ever westward, until from the cradle of the Society among the verdant hills of Kentucky, a small colony was planted on the Pacific coast. The mother-house of the Order is still in Marion county, Kentucky, about six miles from the site of the little school-house, where once dwelt the nucleus of its now widespread ranks; it is situated on the very spot where Father Badin welcomed Father Nerinckx in 1805, and where both missionaries lived together for many years. The house they occupied is preserved by the Lorettines as a relic, only less valuable in their eyes than the shrine made of logs, brought from the vicinity of St. Charles' Church—logs

which once formed a part of the dwelling of Father Nerinckx, when he was pastor of many churches and founder of the Society of Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross.

There are eight communities in various parts of Kentucky, the birthplace of the Society, one academy and three parochial schools in Illinois, nineteen academies and schools in Missouri, seven in Colorado, eight in New Mexico, two in Texas, two in Alabama. The local Superiors and faculties in all the academies and parochial schools are appointed by the Mother Superior and central council dwelling at Loretto, and to the mother-house there, young members often return to improve themselves for their school duties. Love of Mary and devotion to her dolors is still a prominent feature in the lives of all connected with Loretto, Sisters and pupils alike, thus carrying out the directions given in one of Father Nerinckx's quaintly characteristic letters, "Adhere to the tree that Mary planted there; stand by the cross that Mary erected there. O Loretto Sisters, let Loretto be Loretto forever!"

6. THE SISTERS OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

In a similar state of prosperity we find the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin. This Congregation was founded in Ireland by Miss Nano Nagle, with the view of educating the daughters of the working classes, but their schools now admit children of every grade, and under the British government their religious teachers are recognized and liberally paid by the Board of Education.

The Congregation was sanctioned by Pius VI. in 1791

and confirmed as a solemn Order by Pius VII. in the year 1805.

There are nearly one hundred convents of this Order in Ireland, fifteen in Newfoundland and several in the British Colonies of the East Indies, Australia and Tasmania. The success of this Order in the British Colonies is remarkable. Their boarding and day-schools are largely attended. They prepare pupils for matriculation at the universities of Sydney and Madras.

In Ireland and India some of these convents have large technical schools and orphanages, as also in Madras, Vepery, and the Punjab, East India.

The houses in New York City, and Staten Island, Albany, Fitchburg (four houses) Dubuque, North and South Dakota, San Francisco (four houses) and Los Angeles, spring from the parent stock in Ireland.

7. SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

This Congregation was founded at Paderborn, Westphalia, November 4, 1850, by Paulina von Mallinckrodt, sister of the distinguished German statesman, Herman von Mallinckrodt. Its progress was wonderful, and within a few years its houses were to be found everywhere in Germany. Its principal object is the education of youth. In 1873 the Sisters opened a house in Wilkesbarre, Pa., and they now have establishments in the dioceses of Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, St. Paul, Albany, Brooklyn, Troy, Harrisburg, Newark, Scranton, and Syracuse.

8. THE SISTERS OF THE ASSUMPTION.

The Congregation of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in the parish of St. Gregory the

Great, diocese of Three Rivers, now of Nicolet, on September 8, 1853, by three young ladies, under the patronage of Rev. J. Harper, pastor, and Rev. J. C. Marquis, his vicar. The chief object of the institution is to educate young girls and prepare them to teach school. The Congregation numbers now above two hundred living members that are sent to their different branch houses in Canada, United States and Northwest Territory. The novitiate is at Nicolet City, where the mother-house was transferred in September, 1872.

9. THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS AND SEVEN DOLORS.

The Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross was founded in France, in 1837, by the Very Rev. B. A. M. Morean, C. S. C.

The aim of this community is to honor the suffering life of the Blessed Virgin by the simple and perpetual vows of religion. The end of the institution is the education of young girls in boarding and parochial schools and visiting the sick in their homes.

The Mission of St. Laurent, near Montreal, Canada, was established in 1847. It separated from the mother-house in 1882, and the Canadian community then took the name of Sisters of the Holy Cross and Seven Dolors. The Congregation contains two hundred and twenty-five professed Sisters and sixty-one novices, six postulants, with thirteen houses in Canada, and twelve in the United States.

10. THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY, OF LOCKPORT, N. Y.

The Institute of the Sisters of St. Mary, placed especially under the protection of the most Blessed Virgin,

has for its principal object the instruction and education of young girls.

It was founded by Rev. Dom Jerome N. J. Minsart, Religious of the Order of St. Bernard, who with the approbation of the Right Rev. Bishop of Namur, Belgium, established it in 1819 as a teaching body.

In 1863, Right Rev. Bishop John Timon introduced the Order in the diocese of Buffalo, N. Y.

The foundress, Rev. Mother Emilie, with four other Sisters, came to America with Rev. Father Smarius, S. J., and shortly after, Rev. Father John de Smet, S. J., accompanied four more Sisters from Belgium to New York.

Rev. Mother Emilie founded the first house in this country in 1863, at Lockport, where the novitiate and the training-school for the teachers of the institute are located.

11. THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY NAMES OF JESUS AND MARY.

Of recent origin also is the Society of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. On All Saints' Day, 1843, the first three Sisters, Eulalia Durocher, Melodia Dufresne and Henrietta Cere, laid the foundation of this community at Longueuil, in the diocese of Montreal. Today its statistics give a list of 727 professed Sisters, 36 novices and 38 postulants. In Montreal it has eleven houses with 2850 pupils; in Valleyfield, five houses with 790 pupils; in St. Hyacinth, two houses with 180 pupils; in the archdiocese of St. Boniface, five houses with 530 pupils; in London, four houses with 350 pupils; and in the United States from New York to California and

Oregon, and as far south as Key West there are twenty-seven houses with 21,452 pupils.

12. THE SISTER-SERVANTS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.

The Congregation of the Sister-Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, was founded at Monroe, Mich., in 1845, by Rev. Gillet, with the approbation and co-operation of Right Rev. Bishop Lefevre of Detroit.

Placed under the protection of Mary Immaculate, its special mission is the education of youth. The Sisters use every means to promote the honor of their patroness, and strenuously endeavor to inculcate in the hearts of their pupils a tender and childlike devotion to her.

In 1857, Right Rev. Mgr. Joos, V. G., was appointed to direct the community, and to his wise administrative ability are due its progress and prosperity of to-day.

13. SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.

This Society had its heroic beginning in France during the Revolution in 1789. The founder of the new institute was Rev. Père de Clorievierre, provincial of the Society of Jesus in Paris, aided by other members of his community.

The Society was introduced into the United States in 1853 by the Venerable Madame Victorine Boucher, Madamoiselle Ernestine Nardin, the present provincial, and Madame Marie Le Masson, at present Superior at Cleveland, Ohio. As in Europe, the success of the Order in this country has been marvellous. In the United States the members of the Order conduct the following good works: Academies for the higher education of young

ladies, kindergartens and preparatory schools for little girls and boys, parochial schools for white and Indian girls, trades schools for deaf and dumb boys and girls, homes for working-girls of good character, institutes for improved instruction of deaf-mutes (pure oral and combined methods), day nurseries for the children of working mothers, night refuges for homeless women and children, orphan asylums for both white and Indian children, educational mission schools for Indian and Italian children, and a home for aged and infirm priests.

14. SISTERS OF THE HOLY HUMILITY OF MARY.

This community was founded in the diocese of Nancy, France, in the year 1855, by Rev. John Joseph Begel, parish priest of Laitre. In 1864 the founder, with the whole community, immigrated to the United States and by order of the Right Rev. A. Rapp, bishop of Cleveland, settled near the village of New Bedford, Lawrence Co., Pa. The convent grounds and vicinity are now known by the name of "Villa Maria." This place, though originally in the diocese of Pittsburg, belongs now, by special agreement, to the diocese of Cleveland. Miss Antoinette Poitiers, in religion Mother Mary Magdalene, was the foundress and first Superioress, after whose death on March 7, 1864, Mother M. Anna became Superioress and held that office until 1883, when Mother M. Odile was elected. Mother M. Patrick, who was elected in 1889 is the present Superioress. The principal good works in which the Sisters are engaged, are teaching, the care of the sick, and the maintenance and education of orphans. They also take charge of the choirs and decorate the altars of the churches in the various parishes where they are engaged in teaching. The Religious keep an orphan

asylum at the mother-house, Villa Maria, and they teach at present in three parochial schools at Cleveland, Ohio, and in parochial schools at Paynesville, Berea, Alliance, Doylestown, Niles and Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

The Orders of Mercy.

1. THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NAZARETH.

In Kentucky we find the first organized community of these Sisters who, under the invocation of the Queen of heaven, devote themselves to corporal works of mercy and by their disinterested and self-sacrificing devotion to the bodily needs of their fellow-creatures win many souls to the kingdom of God. They are known as the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. To-day they count two hundred and sixty members and thirty-six novices, all engaged in twenty-four schools and hospitals. This Society is indebted for its origin, and, in a great measure, for its subsequent success, to the heroic efforts made in its behalf by Right Rev. Dr. David, coadjutor-bishop of Louisville.

On the 21st of January, 1813, this saintly prelate gave to the new Sisters their rule of life, according to the spirit of which they were to adopt the life of the Virgin Mother of Nazareth as the model of their own. Like her they were to instruct poor children and servants, to visit and nurse the sick irrespective of their religion; in a word, to practice all kinds of corporal and spiritual works of mercy whenever opportunity offered.

2. THE SISTERS OF MERCY.

Very numerous have those colonies of Sisters become which at different periods of time were transplanted from Ireland and are known as the Sisters of Our

Blessed Lady of Mercy, or familiarly, as the Sisters of Mercy. This religious community was organized in Dublin, in 1829, by Miss Catharine McAuley. In that same year Bishop England of Charleston established a colony of them in his episcopal city. This last had but one branch, the house at Savannah. The former, however, spread rapidly, not only over Ireland and England, but through most of the British provinces scattered all over the world. In the year 1843 Bishop O'Connor brought seven of these Sisters from Ireland to found a house in Pittsburg. The great and zealous Archbishop Hughes, in the same year, introduced several into his large and populous city where they founded the spacious convent of St. Catharine, at the corner of Mulberry and Houston Streets, not far from what was, at that time, the cathedral and episcopal residence. In 1843 they came to Newfoundland, and in 1854 to San Francisco on the Pacific coast. To-day we find them settled in thirty of the principal dioceses of the United States and Canada, busily occupied with the education of young girls, the care of the sick, visiting the prisons and the hospitals, toiling arduously and cheerfully in orphan houses and homes for the insane. Thus, for example, they have in St. Louis a hospital in which the Sisters every year nurse from eight hundred to nine hundred patients, distribute medicine and give medical advice to eight hundred patients at the convent door, and train up some six hundred persons as servants. In addition to all this they visit the poor sick and dying in their own poor homes. In many of the large cities they have established industrial schools, in which females out of employment find food and shelter, and protection from error and vice. In accordance with the spirit of their rule they utilize every opportunity to im-

plant in the souls of their beneficiaries love and confidence in the Mother of God. Who can tell the amount of good that is thus accomplished? Every day the Sisters repeat with their wards the Rosary and the litany of Loretto. All the chief festivals of the Blessed Virgin are for them days of happiness and piety. Their vacation-time lasts from the festival of the Scapular, July 16th, till the feast of the Assumption. Saturdays are their resting-days throughout the year. Every year, on Candlemas Day, kneeling before the altar of their blessed Mother, with lighted tapers in their hands, they repeat anew the vow by which they have dedicated themselves forever to the service of Mary in the persons of her distressed children.

3. SISTERS OF CHARITY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

Among the numberless female Orders in the Church none have a greater devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, than the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. In fact it may be said that the veneration of Our Lady under this, her most glorious title, is peculiarly the devotion of the Sisters of Charity. Their founder, St. Vincent de Paul, was born and passed his early years in the shadow of the renowned sanctuary of Our Lady of Buglose, a humble shrine, but one much frequented as a place of pilgrimage, in the village of Pony, France. And, as his biographer with simple fervor relates: "The power of Mary was there where her name was so especially honored, and the heart of the youthful Vincent seemed to expand beneath its influence and to have capacity to receive it in its fulness."

As a mere child we learn that the future saint was in the habit of directing his toddling steps to the feet of a

statue of Our Lady which his own baby hands had placed in the hollow of an oak. Years passed, the child became a man, a priest, a founder of unnumbered religious organizations, a reformer of abuses, the "apostle of universal charity." Then his devotion to Mary, growing with the years, manifested itself in a signal manner. All his Confraternities, all the works established by him for the good of the Church or the relief of the poor, were invariably placed in an especial manner under the protection of the Mother of God. "And," says M. Abbé Maynard, "two hundred years before the definition of the Church, he proclaimed the privilege of her Immaculate Conception."

Certain it is that among the "Sisters of Charity," established in France by our saint and Mlle. Le Gras, in the year 1633, two especial usages in Mary's honor have from the time of their inception ever been observed in their communities: the first, an act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin on the feast of the Immaculate Conception: the second, the ending each decade of the chaplet by the following profession of faith: "O Most Holy Virgin! I believe and confess thy holy and Immaculate Conception, pure and without spot! O Most Pure Virgin! by thy virginal purity, by thy Immaculate Conception and thy glorious quality of Mother of God, obtain for me of thy dear Son, humility, charity, great purity of heart, body and soul, holy perseverance in my dear vocation, the gift of prayer, a good life and a happy death."

The great saint dies, nearly two hundred years have rolled away into the ages, when a signal favor from Mary comes to crown his devotion to that most gracious Mother. It is the 18th of July, 1830, the eve of the feast of St. Vincent de Paul. The community of the

Sisters of Charity at the mother-house in Paris has retired to rest. Sister Catharine Labouré, one of the humblest members of the Order, but one with a heart full of the warmest love towards Mary, is sleeping as the rest, when, suddenly in her dreams she hears her name called distinctly three times. Awaking, she parts her bed-curtains on the side whence the voice proceeds. A little child of ravishing beauty stands before her. "Come," he whispers, in melodious accents, "Come, Sister, to the chapel—the Blessed Virgin awaits you. Have no fears," adds the child, seeing her natural hesitation, "it is half-past eleven, everybody is asleep, I will accompany you."

Sister Catharine rises, dresses hastily, and accompanies the angel child who walks at her left, and, with the radiant light beaming from his golden hair and noble person, illumines the dark halls and corridors through which they pass. The ponderous chapel door flies open at his touch, the altar is a blaze of lights. The trembling Sister, conducted by her guide, kneels within the sanctuary, her bowed form bathed in the golden glory. There she is favored with her first vision of the Queen of heaven.

In November of this same year, 1830, Sister Catharine is a second time favored with the apparition. The circumstances are thus related by M. Aladel, her spiritual director:

"At half-past five in the evening, while the Sisters are in the chapel making their meditation, the Blessed Virgin appeared to a young Sister as if in an oval picture; she was standing on a globe, only one half of which was visible; she was clothed in a white robe and a mantle of shining blue, having her hands covered as it were, with

diamonds, whence emanated luminous rays falling upon the earth. . . . Around the picture, written in golden letters were these words: 'O Mary! conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!' . . . The reverse of the picture bore the letter M surmounted by a cross, having a bar at its base, and beneath the monogram of Mary were the hearts of Jesus and Mary, the first surrounded with a crown of thorns, the other transpierced with a sword. Then she seemed to hear these words: 'A medal must be struck upon this model; those who wear it indulgenced, and repeat this prayer with devotion, will be, in an especial manner, under the protection of the Mother of God.' At that instant the vision disappeared."

This, of course, was the origin of the modern expression of the devotion to the Immaculate Conception, whose glorious dogma was proclaimed as an article of faith on Dec. 8, 1854, just four-and-twenty years after the vision vouchsafed to the humble Sister of Charity. In the meanwhile the Order to which the favored Religious belonged, was already flourishing in another hemisphere. Hundreds and thousands of miles away, across the mighty waves which separate two continents, a branch of Vincent's wondrous tree, planted by a woman's gentle hand, one day took root upon the virgin soil of the New World. Elizabeth Seton, a devout and holy widow, a zealous convert to the faith, instituted with four young companions, in Emmittsburg, Maryland, the first community of Sisters of Charity in America. First and foremost Mother Seton designed that her Order should be for the poor and suffering, for their help, instruction and enlightenment. The exigencies of the times eventually led to a broader extension of the desire which had come to her

in a moment of grace. Education, and education of the higher sort, she recognized as the crying need of the age. This want she endeavored to supply by the establishment of an academy and convent boarding-school for young ladies in her mother-house, "St. Joseph's in the Valley," about half a mile from Emmittsburg.

In 1817, the Sisters were summoned to New York by Bishop Connolly, where their first care was that of the orphans. In 1843 this New York branch, then numbering thirty-three, was erected into a separate and independent community, of which Sister Elizabeth Boyle, a woman of saintly character, was chosen first Mother Superior. She was succeeded in turn by three remarkable women, namely Mother Angela Hughes—sister to the lion-hearted prelate, he whose very name was a tower of strength and fortitude to the Church in those early days—Mother Jerome Ely, peculiarly identified with hospital work in the great metropolis, and Mother Regina Lawless,—each a heroine and a pioneer in religion's ranks.

At its foundation in New York, the community numbered as we have said, but thirty-three; to-day it counts not less than one thousand two hundred. The Sisters conduct various establishments, academies, parochial schools, hospitals, asylums, orphanages, etc., in all amounting to about five hundred, in the archdiocese of New York, in the dioceses of Albany, Brooklyn, Harrisburg, Hartford, Newark, and Providence. The mother-house and principal academy is at Mount St. Vincent-on-the-Hudson, Mother Mary Rose, the present Superioress, being the seventh Mother.

The establishments conducted by the Sisters from the central house and novitiate at Emmittsburg embrace the archdioceses of Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Mil-

waukee, New Orleans, Philadelphia and San Francisco; the dioceses of Albany, Alton, Buffalo, Dallas, Davenport, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Mobile, Monterey, Los Angeles, Natchez, Peoria, Richmond, Rochester, St. Joseph, Syracuse, Vincennes, Wilmington and Kansas City, Mo. The Sisters number in all, some one thousand six hundred.

A foundation from a branch of the New York community was established in Newark, N. J., by Right Rev. Bishop Bayley on Sept. 30, 1859. These Sisters have their mother-house and largest academy at Madison, N. J. the venerable Mother M. Xavier, Superior. They also have establishments in the archdiocese of Boston, and in the dioceses of Harrisburg, Hartford, Newark and Trenton. Their community numbers in all about eight hundred.

4. SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY OF REFUGE.

Another great work, and one most pleasing to the Refuge of Sinners, and, indeed, most advantageous to human society, is being accomplished by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge (Good Shepherd). These devoted servants of Mary are engaged in rescuing from temporal and eternal perdition the unhappy daughters of shame and vice, and also, in another part of their institution, preserving others who might be exposed to fall into such bodily and spiritual disaster. Without any doubt it was that loving Mother whom we properly call the Refuge of Sinners, who, in the middle of the seventeenth century, inspired the holy priest in Caen, in France, Father Eudes, to establish such an asylum of Our Lady of Refuge. She it was, too, who impelled the good Sisters of the Order of

the Good Shepherd, in the year 1845, to come to Louisville. About the same time a similar foundation was begun in Montreal. To-day we find the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in most of the large cities of the United States, such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Baltimore, New Orleans, St. Louis, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Columbus, Cincinnati and many others.

5. SISTERS OF CHARITY (GRAY NUNS).

The General Hospital of Montreal, the mother-house of the Order of Sisters of Charity (Gray Nuns), was founded in 1747 by the Venerable Mother Youville. Three other communities emanated from this original one : the Sisters of Charity of Montreal (the Gray Nuns), having the same name and almost the same habit; the Sisters of Charity of St. Hyacinthe, founded in 1840; those of Ottawa, founded in 1845; and those of Quebec, founded in 1849.

The community of the Sisters of Charity of the hospital at St. Hyacinthe, has for its object the care of the aged poor and infirm of both sexes, the education of orphan boys and girls and of the abandoned poor, the nursing of the sick in hospitals, and the visiting of them at their own homes. They also conduct refuges for children called "gardens of infancy," or day nurseries.

The particular devotion paid by this Order to the Mother of God, consists first, in a special exercise of prayer to excite in their hearts the same dispositions that animated the Blessed Virgin; second, in true devotion to Mary, such as is taught by the Blessed de Montfort: third, in a particular devotion to "Our Lady of the Seven Dolors," whose feast is one of the principal ones of their House, on the third Sunday of every month a solemn

procession in her honor being conducted in all their churches.

6. THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF ST. LOUIS.

On November 16, 1872, there arrived in St. Louis six Sisters, members of a religious community in Paris, who had been expelled from that city during the Franco-Prussian war.

They at once set about the institution of a new Congregation, the main object of which was to be the nursing of the sick. They rented part of a house opposite St. Mary's Church, St. Louis, and as the city was suffering from smallpox at that time, they were soon busily engaged. In the following year, they erected their first permanent residence, and took the name they are now known by, from the adjoining church. During the yellow fever plague which visited the South, especially Memphis, in 1878, the Sisters not only volunteered their services to nurse those stricken by the pestilence, but five laid down their lives in the exercise of their charity. In February, 1877, they purchased a piece of property, on which stood a residence, for the purpose of establishing their own hospital, but as the calls on their charity increased they were subsequently compelled to erect a large building, and to this they were later on obliged to make an addition, which was dedicated in November, 1896. In their new buildings the Sisters can accommodate about one hundred and fifty patients. All are welcome, especially the poor, no matter what their creed or nationality. During the year 1895, out of one thousand two hundred and eighty-five patients, more than seven hundred were cared for gratuitously. The Sisters do not confine their labors to the hospital, but also nurse the sick in their homes.

Beside the hospital in St. Louis, the Sisters have charge of others in Kansas City, Chillicothe, and St. Charles, Missouri, and in Venice, Illinois. They have chosen the Blessed Virgin as their special patron, and celebrate her feasts, great and small.

7. LITTLE SISTERS OF THE ASSUMPTION (NURSING SISTERS OF THE POOR).

The Little Sisters of the Assumption came to this country from Paris at the cordial invitation of the Most Rev. Archbishop of New York. A house had been rented and prepared for their reception, and in May, 1891, the Sisters arrived and entered at once upon their work, of which they have since found a plenty. In January, 1872, the Society was incorporated, and the house they then occupied proving too small, and unsuitable for the need of the Sisters and their work, more commodious quarters were purchased.

The Sisters of the Assumption are not allowed to receive any money from those whom they nurse, and their needs and the expenses of their house are provided for entirely by the generosity of the charitable.

Besides caring for their patients, the Sisters are often compelled to furnish nourishment and medicines. They make no distinction in the cases they receive and care for, except the necessary one imposed by their limited capacity.

CHAPTER V.

The Sodality of the Blessed Virgin.

The sodalities occupy a middle place between the ecclesiastical Orders and the ordinary Confraternities of the laity. By reason of their organized membership, an exact direction on the part of the clergy and other Superiors, and by a closer bond of fellowship, they differ from the more ordinary Confraternities. For the same reason they bear a resemblance to the regular Religious Confraternities.

This Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, which is more especially intended for young students, owes its origin to the heart of genuine Catholic life in Rome.

In the year 1563, there lived in that city a young scholastic of the Society of Jesus, named John Leontius, a native of Lüttich. He was professor in the German College, and, while laboring faithfully to enrich the minds of his pupils with worldly knowledge, lost no opportunity of leading their hearts to God.

Convinced that the protection of the Blessed Virgin is a most effective means of preserving holy innocence of life, and of advancing one in Christian perfection, the young professor from time to time would assemble together the most devout among his pupils, to recommend

to them devotion to Mary, and to teach them how to make themselves worthy of her love. They set apart for themselves an oratory where they said their prayers in common, read edifying books and made solemn resolutions to honor the blessed Mother by a faithful imitation of her virtues and the frequent reception of the sacraments. This pious Association was known as the Sodality of the Annunciation.

The abundant fruits of sanctity reaped from these gatherings by the young students, brought upon them the notice and attention of the Superiors of the college where they studied. Father Claudius Acquaviva, who was the General of the Order of the Jesuits, communicated the matter to Pope Gregory XIII. That Pontiff not only approved the pious Association, but also by a bull of erection, dated the 5th of December, 1584, raised it to the dignity of a spiritual Society under the title and invocation of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, granting to it, moreover, abundant indulgences. Many succeeding Popes confirmed this approval and erection, and increased the indulgences.

In a short time other sodalities were formed among the students in many Catholic seats of learning. Even in Germany and Switzerland this fair plant struck deep roots and bore the fairest of fruits. It strengthened the young men in their faith, in piety, and virtue. It brought forth great saints. St. Francis de Sales, St. Charles Borromeo, and St. Alphonsus Liguori, were zealous members, when students, of their respective college Sodalities. St. Aloysius was not only a member when at college, but, after his canonization was chosen as patron and the illustrious model of college students in general, and also the protecting patron of the Sodality.

When Justus Lipsius, the renowned scholar and famous professor in the high school of Louvain, in Belgium, was dying in March, 1606, he was asked by his Confessor, who was no other than the pious and learned Lessius, what it was, among all his other actions, that brought him the most consolation on his death-bed. The learned professor replied without a moment's hesitation, "My membership in the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin."

Beside the illustrious French bishops, Bossuet and Fénelon, Kings Ferdinand II. and III. of the imperial house of Austria, the Bavarian Dukes Ferdinand and Maximilian, we find as a true sodalist the most learned man of the eighteenth century, Pope Benedict XIV., who, when chief pastor of the Church of Christ, confirmed the erection of this beautiful Association and encouraged young students to join it and practice faithfully the duties thereby enjoined upon them. In his apostolic brief of the 27th of September, 1784, this Pope says, "It is impossible to describe all the benefits, which, by means of this beautiful and pious institution, have been obtained from Heaven for men of every condition of life. Many, who from childhood have walked in the ways of innocence and the fear of the Lord, under the protection of the ever Blessed Virgin, and without having ever wandered from the right path, have been enabled to keep their morals intact, and to lead a life becoming Christians and servants of Mary; they have never ceased to show to the world the brightest example, and have merited the grace to persevere to the end. Others, who, through temptation to vice, have unhappily gone astray, have been enabled to leave the path of unrighteousness which they were treading, and have become fully converted through the assistance of the compassionate Mother of God, to whose

service they had dedicated themselves in the Sodality. They have adopted a temperate, just, and pious mode of life. Sustained by the effective religious practices of that Society they have persevered in that new life. It has also come to pass that the tender love for Mary, imbibed in early years, has elevated many members to a high degree of perfection, so that we have seen them willingly and cheerfully renouncing the world, its treasures, and its idle, fleeting enjoyments, in order to choose in the monastery a better and a safer part. By their vows they have attached themselves to the cross of Jesus Christ, thenceforth to busy themselves with the salvation of the souls of their fellow-men and with the attainment of their own personal sanctification.

"From the foregoing it is clear to all how enlightened and salutary has been the course of the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, who from the beginning have bestowed on the devotional exercises of the Sodalities the special protection of the Holy See, thereby seeking to further their growth and progress, and have also granted to the Superiors of the Sodalities, as well as to the members, many graces and eminent privileges.

"We, in fine, who, before our elevation to the Apostolic Chair, were a member of the Sodality, which, under the invocation of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, had been erected in the professed house of the Society of Jesus in Rome—we, who remember, with pleasure, those pious, instructive and edifying devotions, consider it a duty to avail ourselves of the powers and privileges attached to the high office of Chief Pastor to favor and to encourage these pious and admirable Sodalities which have contributed so much to piety and to the salvation of souls. Hence, in our mandate, given under

the form of a brief, bearing date April the 14th, we have approved, and confirmed and enlarged all former favors and privileges granted by our illustrious predecessors, as may be seen from the context of our letter."

CHAPTER VI.

The Sodality of the Children of Mary.

The Sodality of the Children of Mary is set apart for the female sex and bears to them about the same relation as the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin does to the other sex, and especially to young men students.

This Society of Mary, so rich in blessings, is a fair plant of recent growth in the Church. It has accomplished untold wonders in strengthening faith and preserving virtue in the foremost ranks of female society. Its conception and establishment are due to Father Xavier Ravignan of the Society of Jesus, that illustrious missionary and pulpit orator of France, who died the 26th of February, 1858. The rules of this pious sisterhood, written by Father Ravignan's own hand, are as follows: "We propose to ourselves the following Christian objects of our union in heart and in prayer: On the first Friday in every month we will unite in heart in making reparation for the outrages which Our Lord is constantly suffering in the Blessed Sacrament. We will ask, on behalf of one another, for advance in interior life and resolution, and that love of suffering on which it is to be built.

"On Saturday, the day set apart for devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we will ask, on behalf of

one another, the grace of gaining some hearts to Jesus Christ.

"We will choose one day in each month to make the preparation for death. We will ask, on behalf of one another, the grace of a happy death, with a joyful trust in God's mercy, and in the assistance of the Blessed Virgin and of all the saints, who will come to assist us at that hour like powerful and faithful friends.

"Our next communion shall be offered for our own deceased relatives, and those of our sisters in the Congregation.

"The next communion shall be offered for our own children, and for those of our sisters in the Congregation, and to obtain grace that we may rightly perform our duties to them and to our families.

"Another day shall be set apart for the holy Catholic Church, its missionaries and its priests. When the need they have for grace is considered, the duty of the faithful to aid their glorious ministry is plain.

"Another day for our own living relatives, and for those of our sisters in the Congregation, and for the persons who may be recommended to our prayers.

"Another day for the neglected parishes in the country, where there is so much spiritual destitution, so much help to be sought for these poor souls. We will ask, on behalf of one another, the grace of giving edification to these parishes, and of doing something for their good.

"We propose also the following easy and beneficial objects of our union in external work: What ought to give us the greatest assurance of being united forever in God's presence is the care to unite ourselves closely with the intentions of the Church by adopting its appointed prayers, celebrating its feasts, and venerating the saints

whom it honors. Love for God is a tie which binds together all the elect in heaven and on earth.

"A special bond of union among us will be the habitual use of holy meditation. We will devote half an hour each morning to this practice.

"We will each choose some one particular point on which to make an examination of ourselves once at least in the day—for example, in the evening. By thus giving ourselves up to recollection and the interior life, we shall gain the principal wish of our heart, self-conquest and mortification.

"It will be our duty to take care to prevent our piety being irksome to others or repulsive, and we will unhesitatingly renounce every kind of interior consolation to escape giving the smallest annoyance to any member of our family."

The first meeting of the Children of Mary was held on the first of May, 1846, in the house of the Countess Sophia Swetchine, in St. Dominic Street, Paris, in her private chapel. These devotional gatherings, which soon grew to very large proportions, became from that time one of the special cares of Father Ravignan's life. Each month he delivered two discourses before them: one at the celebration of the monthly Mass, the second in the evening, before benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. He also preached every year a retreat founded on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. His zeal led him to admit strangers to these retreats of the Children of Mary, and ladies of worldly lives found themselves side by side with ladies of the greatest piety—there were even Protestants mixed with Catholics. The chapel, the galleries, and even the sanctuary, up to the very steps of the altar, were filled, and the assembly consisted of some six

hundred ladies belonging to the most distinguished circles of Parisian society.

It is easy to conceive that a work of this magnitude must have created some interest even amid the countless subjects of conversation in Paris, and it could not fail to have a real and salutary influence. How many souls have secured peace and God's grace in this sanctuary through the edifying example of the members, but, more than all, through the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin.

This admirable sisterhood soon began to make rapid progress, striking deep and lasting roots in other cities beside the capital of France. In the New World a very flourishing Association of the Children of Mary has been established in connection with the convent of the Sacred Heart in West Seventeenth Street, New York.

Beside the people in the world the young lady pupils of the higher academies have formed similar Associations of the Children of Mary. They take the Blessed Virgin for their sublime virginal model, and join her Sodality in order the better to preserve the holy purity of their souls, and to prepare themselves for the difficulties and temptations that may beset them in their future lives.

When the young lady leaves her convent-school, and returns on the dangerous paths of life, she is accompanied by the pleasant recollections of the happy hours spent before the shrine of the blessed Mother. She remembers the kind admonitions of her spiritual directress. Better than all, she carries away with her the blessing, the protection, the love of that holy Mother of God who never abandons one of her children.

CHAPTER VII.

The Confraternities of Mary.

All the faithful are children of the same Father, reverers of the same heavenly Mother, and members of the same great Society, the holy Catholic Church. Why, then, should there be special Associations and Confraternities?

It is true, indeed, that all the members of the Church, united by the bond of one faith, one baptism, and one law of charity, constitute the one grand brotherhood of the heavenly kingdom on earth. But there exists, besides, in the spirit of Christianity, a living tendency to a more special and intimate union of such members as seek to obtain that most important of all ends, their own and their neighbors' sanctification, in a special manner, and by and through special means.

Is it not true that from time immemorial the powers of human minds and human hands, have been formed by men of the world into unions, in order to obtain some great result? Has not the power of association, have not leagues of all kinds, been most assiduously planned and organized in order to make war, with united forces, on God, His laws, His holy Church, her freedom and her rights?

Great results are reached only through association with others, by whom the individual is sustained, encouraged and guided. Great, very great things have been accom-

plished in the Catholic Church by the power of association.

Now, Confraternities are Christian unions regularly organized and working for a certain pious purpose, with fixed rules approved by the Church, and generally enriched by her with special privileges. Thus, as circumstances require, Confraternities are established for the assistance of the poor, the care of the sick, the abatement of enmities, the instruction of the ignorant, or for special devotion towards some one or other of the sacred mysteries of our holy religion.

The faithful laity at all times have taken lovingly and zealously to those Associations that have been specially established for honoring the ever Blessed Virgin Mary. At all times, too, has the Catholic Church shown her regard for such Societies by enriching them, the principal ones most abundantly, with indulgences and other privileges.

It becomes now our task, dear Christian reader, to make ourselves acquainted with the erection, aim and spiritual advantages of at least the principal and most widely known of the Associations of Mary.

I. THE ROSARY SOCIETY.

We will speak first of the origin of this Society. An account has already been given, on page 186 of this work, of St. Dominic's miraculous institution of the holy Rosary. The Confraternity of the Rosary took its rise at the same time. Everywhere, but more especially in the towns and villages, countless Associations were formed during the first burst of enthusiasm. The members bound themselves to recite this wonderful prayer a certain

number of times in the week or month. In a short time these different Societies were placed under one general rule and reduced to form and order. The approbation of the Apostolic See was extended to them by Pope Urban IV. in the year 1261. Since that time the Rosary Society has been enriched with many spiritual blessings, by twenty-five different Popes, all of whom, in their official letters, have extolled its excellence and encouraged its growth and extension.

The Confraternity of the Holy Rosary soon took deep root in the affections of the universal Church and spread out its branches with wonderful rapidity, affording refreshing consolation to myriads of pious souls. In its rank were seen members of all nationalities, and of every condition in life, from the prince on his throne to the beggar by the wayside. Hence, to-day, no one ought to be ashamed of belonging to this Society, excusing himself under the silly pretext that the devotion of the Rosary is adapted only to the poor and unlettered.

Many Popes deemed themselves privileged to be members of the Rosary Society. Among them were Innocent V., Benedict XI., Pius V., Gregory XIII., Paul V., Alexander VII., Clement IX., Benedict XIII., Pius VII. and Pius IX. The present learned and saintly Pontiff, Leo XIII., recites his Rosary every evening, soon after sunset.

The Emperor Charles V. of Germany, was a member of the Rosary Society and always looked upon the devotion as one of the best means for securing the protection of Heaven for himself and his subjects. Once he began to tell his beads he would not permit himself to be interrupted even on the most important business. He would say calmly, "As soon as I shall have said my Rosary I will attend to the matter." The Emperor Frederick III.

besought the Pope to re-establish this Confraternity in the city of Cologne. When permission was obtained he wrote with his own hand his own name and that of his wife, Eleonora, and that of his son, Maximilian, in the book of enrolment.

Among the many great statesmen who practised this devotion it may suffice to mention only one, the patriotic and able Daniel O'Connell, the liberator of Ireland. He often, even in his public speeches to the people, alluded to Mary as the Mother of Ireland. After his celebrated speech in the English parliament, in advocacy of Catholic emancipation, at a moment when one of the most cherished wishes of his heart was either to be realized or perhaps forever extinguished, he stood one side, with his beads concealed in his hands, secretly saying his Rosary.

It would be superfluous to mention even a thousandth part of the names of bishops, priests and other Religious of both sexes who loved and practised this devotion. I shall therefore limit myself to the simple explanation of the regulations necessary for the erection of this Society, and to the naming of the benefits, great and numerous, to be derived from it.

Strictly speaking, the right to erect Confraternities of the holy Rosary belongs to the Apostolic Chair of Peter. This right has been delegated to the Dominican Order, as the inheritor of the zeal and piety of its founder, St. Dominic. The Fathers whose privilege it is, by virtue of the apostolic indult, to exercise this faculty throughout the world, are first the General of the Order, and secondly, the vicar whom he may appoint. The provincial, too, of each province holds the same right, as delegate, within the limits of his active jurisdiction. Bishops, especially

those administering in parts where the Dominican Order has ceased to exist, must apply to the General of the Order, for permission to establish Societies of the Rosary within their dioceses. Pastors of souls obtain the same permission from the same source, but ordinarily through their bishops. Whenever a Rosary Society is to be established in any parish there ought to be provided by the pastor or people a special chapel of the Blessed Virgin, or at least an altar, distinct and apart from the main altar. In this chapel, or at this altar, the festival of the holy Rosary ought to be celebrated every year, on the first Sunday of October, in obedience to the order of Pope Gregory XIII. In the chapel, or over the altar, there ought to be placed a statue or picture of the Blessed Virgin, surrounded by representations of the fifteen mysteries. At least there ought to be a figure of the Virgin and Child, with St. Dominic kneeling, in the act of receiving a rosary with his right hand.

In regard to the obligations and duties of the members, I will state that in order to become a member of the Rosary Society and to enjoy a share in its benefits the candidate must

1. Have his Christian name enrolled on the Rosary register.

2. He must have a rosary properly blessed. It is to be blessed by a priest of the Dominican Order, or by any other priest empowered by the Pope, or by the General of the Order. Every member should consider it a duty to keep reverently and affectionately this blessed token of attachment to the Virgin Mother and, if possible, to carry it about the person.

3. He must recite, ordinarily, the full quantity of prayers; that is to say, the fifteen decades which compose

the devotion. In early times it was prescribed by a mandate of Sixtus IV. to recite these fifteen decades at least once every day. In the year 1534 Pope Clement VII. extended the time from one day to one week, leaving it to the discretion of the person praying to distribute the fifteen decades over seven days, saying about two decades a day, or saying it all on one day. It is a good distribution to say two decades every day from Sunday to Friday inclusive, and to say three on Saturday. If the person foresees that he may not have time towards the end of the week he can say the greater part on the first days. The Rosary may be said at all hours and in all places, whether the one who prays be kneeling, standing, sitting or walking. The sick, of course, and even the weary, may say it lying down.

4. While saying the Rosary he must make some pious reflections, or a meditation, on each successive mystery. He should not be content with uttering the words with his lips. He ought to feel them in heart and soul. Attention is indispensably necessary. It is not precisely requisite to make a profound and lengthened meditation on each mystery. They should be held up before the mind in such a way that the person praying sees them in spirit and is impressed by them, and is thus enabled to draw spiritual fruit from them. This may be accomplished by a repeated raising of the thoughts to Jesus and Mary—a kind of meditation in which contemplation and memory are joined to the words of the prayer, while the heart is also affected by pious emotion. In this way the grand truths of religion may be kept before the mind with vast profit to the soul. In any case, it is necessary to reflect in some way or other on the mysteries, in order to fulfil the duty and the conditions and to gain the indulgence.

Sick persons, and those otherwise incompetent to make meditation, especially according to rule, have been exempted from this duty by the bull *Pretiosus* of Benedict XIII., bearing date of May 26, 1727. For such persons it is sufficient that they tell the beads reverently, say the prayers devoutly, and, if opportunity offer, to listen attentively and carefully to the explanation given of the mysteries by a priest or other instructed person. Above all no one should say the Rosary badly, indolently or coldly. The heart should be prepared beforehand by a good act of contrition. Distracting thoughts should be set aside. The lips should but express the thoughts and feelings of the heart. A person should not perform this devotion while entertaining willingly in his heart an affection for the vanities of the world, or for dangerous occasions of sin, or while he even voluntarily thinks of such things. One should not pray glibly and as a matter of course and common routine. One should pray with internal devotion and an intention pleasing to God. Alas! conscience, unclean because of unrepented past sins, indolence, distraction, imperfect intention and lack of attention are often so many heavy, dark clouds obscuring the rays of the sun of divine grace. "Destruction is thy own, O Israel" (Osee, xiii. 9). "Thou hast set a cloud before thee that [thy] prayer may not pass through" (Lamentations, iii. 44). True, Mary is the Refuge of Sinners, and pities them, but she has no sympathy for those persons who still cherish an affection for their darling sins, who will not tear asunder the ties of sinful habits, or will not flee from dangerous occasions. She is the refuge of those sinners only who, with contrite hearts and with penitential tears, come confessing their sins and earnestly desiring to begin a new and better life.

5. The member of a Rosary Society must receive the sacraments on those days to which the plenary indulgences are attached, if he desires to gain them. On this point the Father Confessor is to give directions to his penitents, and not the Confraternity. It is wise and salutary to make a general confession at the time of enrolment in the Society, or as soon after as possible. Generally the members should receive the sacraments very frequently.

The chief works recommended, and of which each member may choose the one most in accordance with his circumstances and state of life, are as follows:

1. Visiting and caring for the sick and dying.
2. Praying for the souls of deceased members.
3. Attendance at the meetings of the Confraternity, at which there should be edifying discussions on the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Society.
4. Attendance at the public recitation of the Rosary.
5. Faithful attendance at the solemnities and the public church services of the Rosary Confraternity, namely, at the High Mass, as well as the sermon, Vespers and procession held on Rosary Sunday; attendance at public services on other festivals of Mary, and also at the solemnities and processions of the members on all the first Sundays of the month; at the Masses that on the appointed days are offered up in honor of the Mother of God, and, finally, at the annual Requiem Mass that is offered up for deceased members, on the Sunday next following to Rosary Sunday and on the four days in the year set apart for commemoration of the dead members and benefactors.

2. THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE SCAPULAR OF MOUNT CARMEL.

The badge of this Association is called the Scapular. It consists of two small pieces of brown woollen cloth, so joined by two strings that they may be worn on the breast and back of the member, the strings resting on the right and left shoulders. It derives its name, Scapular, from the Latin word *scapula*, signifying shoulder. It is also sometimes called the Little Habit of the Blessed Virgin to distinguish it from the larger scapular which was prescribed by the Blessed Virgin herself for the monks of the Carmelite Order, and which reaches down to the feet.

The devotion of the Scapular and its Confraternity may be attributed to a famous apparition of the Mother of God, which occurred at Cambridge, England, on the 16th day of July, 1251, to St. Simon Stock, the General of the Carmelite Order in Western Europe. During many years this saint had been praying constantly to the Blessed Virgin to secure her protection for his persecuted Order. Then she herself appeared to him, with mild and gentle mien, and holding a Scapular in her hand. "Receive," she said, "my beloved son, this Scapular of your Order; it is a special mark of favor which I have asked for you and the other children of Mount Carmel. Whosoever shall die wearing this garment shall be saved from eternal flames. It is a mark of salvation, a protection in all dangers and a pledge of special peace and safety." The learned and illustrious Pope Benedict XIV. asserted plainly that he believed in the genuineness of this apparition and that, in his opinion, every one ought to believe in it.

Grand and consoling as is this promise of the Mother of God, namely, that those who wear the Scapular shall be

secured against eternal perdition, yet it is self-evident that those persons can have no right to look for a verification of such promise in their favor who, depending solely on the Scapular, still continue to live in sin and vice. Whoever rejects, with unrepenting heart, the graces that Mary is willing to obtain for him, nullifies that promise. Hence St. Simon Stock, in his letter announcing to his fellow Religious this promise made to him by Mary, says, "Brethren! while ye cherish and keep this promise in your hearts, be always mindful to render your calling more secure by the practice of good works, and never desist. Be vigilant. Be ever grateful for this great mercy. Pray constantly that the words spoken to me may be verified."

The holy Scapular is a badge of the service that we owe to Mary. We wear it as the servants in the court of a king or a prince wear their liveries and other marks of office. Now, if we wish to live in the service of Mary we must make her will the great motive power of our whole lives. But her will is precisely identical with the will of God, which is nothing else but our sanctification through prayer, labor, struggles and other good works.

Still another saving benefit appertains to the Scapular. About half a century after the apparition vouchsafed to St. Simon, in the year 1334, the Blessed Virgin appeared to Pope John XXII. in order to commend to his favor the Order of Mount Carmel. She even extended her solicitude so far into the world as to promise help to the souls of the brotherhood of Mount Carmel in purgatory, and to rescue them from its torments as soon as possible, especially on the Saturdays dedicated to her honor. Pope Benedict XIV. wrote and spoke in defence of this supernatural manifestation. In 1613 Pope Paul V. gave

permission to the Carmelite Fathers to preach this pious belief. He also uttered on this subject the following words, which describe the conditions under which we may expect to obtain, through Mary, a speedy release from purgatory: "Christians may believe what is taught concerning the benefit that is granted to the brotherhood of the Scapular, namely, that the ever Blessed Virgin, by her unquestioned mediation, her constant prayers, her merits, her social patronage, especially on Saturday, a day that the Church has made sacred to her, will lend assistance even after death to the souls of the members who have died in the love of God, after having during life worn the Scapular, observed strict chastity, recited the Office of the Blessed Virgin, kept the fasts of the Church and observed abstinence on Wednesdays and Saturdays."

In regard to the spread of this devotion: St. Simon was unwilling to restrict the many rich blessings of the Scapular to himself and his brethren in the Order. He was most anxious to scatter them far and wide throughout the Catholic Church. Princes and people, charmed by this comforting promise, came in crowds from all quarters to the holy monks to whose keeping and dispensing the Blessed Virgin had entrusted the valuable treasure. Yes, the Scapular soon adorned the breasts of the most pious, the noblest and bravest men. Beside several of the earlier Popes the later ones have all worn the Scapular with confidence and reverence. When Cardinal Hypolitus Aldobrandini, the trusted friend of St. Philip Neri, was elected Pope on the 30th of January, 1592, and was about to ascend the pontifical throne under the name of Clement VIII., the official who in accordance with the ancient custom divested the new Pope

of his cardinal's robes in order to clothe him in the Papal costume, wanted to remove the scapular. But the devout Pontiff would not allow this, for he said, "Leave Mary with me, otherwise Mary might leave me." St. Edward, king of England; St. Louis IX.; Henry IV.; Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., of France; the Emperors Ferdinand II. and III., the kings of Spain and Portugal all have worn the Scapular beneath their royal vesture. Equipped with it they have gone forth to battle and victory. The Christian people also have extensively worn this simple livery from the beginning down to our own day. All the writers who treat of this devotion are unanimous in their testimony that there is no other form of devotion which made so much noise at its beginning and none other, the Rosary alone excepted, that is more universally practised.

The object of the Scapular and of its devotion is as follows:

1. That by the image of Mary which we carry on our breasts an inward reverence, a childlike love and firm confidence in her may be enkindled in our hearts.

2. That by thinking on the image of the Blessed Virgin resting on our bosoms every unwholesome sentiment may be stifled in our hearts.

3. That by remembering Mary on our Scapulars we may be preserved from every sin.

4. That we may be reminded that the blessed Mother is willing to assure, through the Scapular, her condescension and motherly affection to us, as well as her special protection in dangers.

5. That by means of the Confraternity of the Holy Scapular, devotion to the Blessed Virgin may be promoted and diffused among men, thus securing in the best

manner possible her gracious patronage over Christian souls.

The following are the duties assumed by the members of this religious Association :

1. They pledge themselves to render true and sincere veneration and honor to the blessed Mother of God. The best way to do honor to Mary is to imitate her life. Hence the members should earnestly endeavor to be as pure, devout and pious as she was, and as completely devoted to their God.

2. The members of the Scapular Society should strive to become deserving children of their blessed Mother, that they may thus merit her motherly protection.

3. As the virtue of holy purity is, above all other virtues, pleasing to the Immaculate Virgin, her reverers should, under all circumstances, observe the strictest chastity.

4. The members should say every day seven "Our Fathers," as many "Hail Marys," and the "Apostles' Creed," partly to obtain her motherly protection for themselves, and partly for the maintenance of the Catholic Church.

5. The members should at all times wear the Scapular near their hearts.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID DAILY AFTER THE PRESCRIBED "OUR FATHERS," "HAIL MARYS," ETC.

I fly to thy patronage and protection, O holy Mother of God! Guard me against and save me from all evil of soul and body! Preserve me amid all the dangers of the world! Preserve me in innocence and virtue and conduct me safely into a happy eternity. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE FESTIVAL OF THE SCAPULAR.

O Mary, Virgin Mother of God, I herewith repeat and renew the covenant that I made with thee when I received thy blessed Scapular, namely, to serve thy divine Son and thee faithfully and generously all through the course of my life. With all the gratitude of a child I thank thee for having been pleased, by the holy Scapular, to receive me as thy son and heir. I promise thee that I will always be thy most dutiful son, that I will inwardly honor thee at all times, and that I will use every effort to imitate thee in piety and virtue. Therefore grant that this holy Scapular may ever be to me what thou didst intend it should be when thou gavest it to mankind; namely, a mark of thy signal protection, a shield against sin, a sign of virtue, and a means of sanctification and salvation. May all this be done in my favor, through the merits of thy Son, my Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

3. THE SCAPULAR OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.*

The azure blue Scapular of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is indebted for its origin and wonderfully rapid diffusion to that venerable servant of God, Ursula Beninkasa, foundress of the Congregation of the Oblates and Theatine recluses. Her exemplary piety was proven amid many trying hardships, greatly extolled by

* Persons wearing the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception have not as yet been united together by a canonical Confraternity, as is the case with the Scapular of Mount Carmel. It ought to be called, rather, a devotion. There are, however, in some places such unions and an effort is being made to form a general Confraternity. I did not wish to separate the two Scapulars in this account.

St. Philip Neri, and pronounced heroic by Pope Pius VI. in a decree issued on the 7th of August, 1793.

On Candlemas Day of the year 1617, this virgin, whose heart was on fire with love for her Creator, was favored by an extraordinary vision. She saw the Blessed Virgin enveloped in a white robe, beneath which she wore a garment of azure blue color. About her was a number of virgins similarly arrayed. In her arms she held the divine Infant, who seemed to speak gently and affectionately to His Mother, telling her that He wished to have a convent established in which should dwell three and thirty virgins under the title of the Immaculate Conception, and who should wear a habit similar in form and color to that worn by herself at that time. He also promised to bestow many graces and other spiritual gifts on all those who would live in that community in accordance with His will. Ursula, taking courage, besought her beloved Redeemer that these promised graces might be imparted also to such persons, living in the world, who entertain a sincere and constant devotion to the Immaculate Mother, who lead a pure Christian life according to their station, and who would wear a small blue scapular. As a sign that her petition was to be granted Sister Ursula saw in spirit a company of angels scattering immense numbers of the small Scapulars all over the surface of the earth.

Sister Ursula, overjoyed to know that her request had been favorably entertained by Heaven, went to work with her other companions in religion to make a number of small blue Scapulars, which she had blessed by a priest, and then distributed them among the faithful. The spiritual profit of this measure was very great.

After the death of this venerated servant of God and

of Mary, her spiritual daughters, in imitation of their beloved foundress, and to continue her good work, ceased not to make and distribute these Scapulars and to encourage the devotion attached to them. Some years later Pope Clement X., who died in 1676, granted to the priests of the Theatine Congregation the right and power to bless and distribute these Scapulars in honor of the Immaculate Conception. The Superior General of that Congregation, who dwells in the convent of "St. Andrew of the Valley," in Rome, grants this privilege to other clergymen who apply for it.

The aim of those wearing this simple scapular ought to be, first of all, to foster within themselves and others a special devotion to the pure Mother of God in her fairest and choicest prerogative, and the one that distinguishes her from all other creatures. The Scapular ought to be a perpetual reminder of that prerogative and a stimulant to that devotion. Then, too, all those who wear this pious badge should strive by constant longings, sighs, and prayers, as well as by their own example, to succeed in having the bad morals of Christians improved, and the sinners themselves brought to a Christian mode of life.

To attain this end no specified prayers are prescribed. To the zeal and discretion of the wearers, and of their spiritual directors, is left the selection of such prayers and other good works as may best contribute to the honor of the Immaculate Virgin.

The spiritual advantages are so great, and the indulgences so extraordinary in number, that the holy doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus Liguori, most earnestly urges and exhorts all Christians to have themselves invested with the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception.

That same zealous shepherd of souls and true reverer of Mary would not rest until the priests of his newly founded Congregation of Redemptorists had obtained the power to invest the laity with this Scapular during the missions and to impart to the recipients the graces connected with the same.

These spiritual advantages it would be impossible here even to mention. If you, Christian reader, already wear this holy Scapular, or intend soon to be invested, procure a little book which contains an index and list of the indulgences. I shall adduce here only one extraordinary advantage, or a kind of summary of the numerous plenary and partial indulgences.

All persons regularly invested with this Scapular, if they wear it constantly and keep themselves in a state of grace, may gain the combined indulgences of the seven principal churches in Rome, of the Churches of the Portiuncula, of Jerusalem, and of St. James at Compostella, in Spain, provided that they say six "Our Fathers," as many "Hail Marys," and "Glory be to the Fathers" in honor of the adorable Trinity and of the Virgin conceived without sin, at the same time beseeching God that He would vouchsafe to exalt the Catholic Church by new triumphs, to exterminate heresies, and to maintain peace among Christian peoples. Moreover, the holy Congregation of Indulgences declared on the 31st of March, 1856, that the above-mentioned indulgences may be obtained every time that the wearer of the Scapular says the prescribed six "Our Fathers," etc., adding that the reception of the sacraments and other prayers are not necessary to secure them. (Pius IX., 14th of April, 1856.)

Verily, Christian reader, the richest treasures of the Church lie open before you. Will you not, for the sake

of your soul's salvation, and for the benefit of the poor souls in Purgatory, draw upon them according to your necessities and to the best of your strength?

4. THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF THE HOLY AND IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

In the year 1668 the Apostolic See granted permission for the performance of public devotions in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This permission was soon followed by another authorizing the establishment of Confraternities, which were at the same time enriched with indulgences. In the year 1753, Pope Benedict XIV. erected the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Mary in the Church of the Holy Redeemer near the Sistine Bridge in Rome. Pope Pius VII. confirmed this devotion and added several indulgences.

It was in more recent times, however, that the devotion and Confraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary received a great impulse, and was diffused generally throughout Christendom. Who is there in the Church to-day that does not know and honor our beloved Lady of Victory? In the very heart of the city of Paris, and in the centre of traffic and trade, about a hundred paces from the Vaudeville Theatre, which is the scene of the most frivolous displays in the world, and not far from the Exchange, which is the very shrine of gamblers, stands the Church of the Friars Minors, universally known as the Church of Our Lady of Victories. That portion of the city contains the parish of the same name. Nearly every spark of faith and morality seemed to have been stamped out of the hearts of the inhabitants. The church stood empty, divine service was neglected,

and the sacraments were abandoned, so that, in the year 1835, in a parish of 27,000 souls, only 720 persons had approached holy communion.

This deplorable condition of religious life filled the heart of the pious pastor, Father Dufriches Desgénettes, with grief and dismay. In his discouragement he turned in every direction, had prayers said and prayed himself, in the hope of directing even one feeble ray of divine grace into the dark, cold hearts of his flock. On the 3d of December, 1836, the sad and troubled pastor of souls was celebrating Mass on the Blessed Virgin's altar in his deserted church. During the sacrifice a thought came repeatedly to his mind as if saying, "If you would save the sinners of your parish, then consecrate them to the holy and immaculate heart of Mary." At first the priest considered this thought a mere distraction, which, coming during the holy sacrifice, ought to be banished at once. But, when Mass was over, the same thought seemed to follow him. The idea seemed delusive and altogether impossible.

Having unbounded confidence in the ever Blessed Virgin, to whom his parish was dedicated, Father Desgénettes resolved to make at least one earnest effort. He put in writing a few rules for an Association of prayer in honor of the sacred heart of Mary. These were approved by the archbishop of Paris on the 10th of the following December. The very next day, on the third Sunday of Advent, the pastor announced to the few persons who were present at Mass, that at seven o'clock on that same evening there would be devotions to the sacred heart of Mary, for the conversion of sinners. The zealous man awaited the appointed hour with feelings of mingled hope and fear. And, lo! at seven o'clock

some five hundred persons were assembled in the church, a number that was never seen within its walls at any other time, except, perhaps, on the grand festivals of Christmas and Easter. Among the audience was an unusually large number of men. During the singing of the litany of the Blessed Virgin, the whole congregation repeated spontaneously and fervently three distinct times, "Refuge of Sinners, pray for us." The pastor, who was kneeling before the image of that kind and gentle "Refuge of Sinners," was so overpowered by his feelings of pious emotion that he cried out to Mary, "O good Mother! thou hearest this cry of love and confidence. Wilt thou not help these poor sinners to return to God? They call on thee, the Refuge of Sinners. Take this pious Association under thy protection, O Mary! In proof of thy good will bring about the conversion of a certain parishioner, whom to-morrow I shall visit in thy name."

The parishioner for whom the priest prayed was a man of eminence in the world, having once been a respected dignitary of the court of King Louis XVI. At that time he was eighty years old, blind, feeble, and very sick. Yet he had ruthlessly rejected the ministrations of his pastor who had hastened to him on hearing of his illness, in order to extend to him the consolations of religion. On Monday morning, the 12th of December, the anxious pastor went again, in the name of Mary, to visit the sick gentleman. Before night the hitherto obstinately unrepentant sinner made a sincere and contrite confession. Soon he received holy communion, and from then till the time of his death, which occurred on the 10th of April, 1837, continued to manifest undoubted signs of a sincere sorrow for the sins of his past life.

Throughout the parish of Our Lady of Victories, and

in the hearts of all who heard the news, this remarkable conversion augmented and strengthened confidence in Mary's protection, and gave assurance of the future success of the projected Society.

On the 22d of the following month, January, 1837, the books were opened for the enrolment of members. Within ten days two hundred and forty persons had entered their names. They were mostly from the parish.

In regard to the Archconfraternity: "It was the intention of Father Desgénettes to form a small Association for his own parish. Judging from circumstances it was not at all probable that people would join it in great numbers. But it was pleasing to God's providence that this insignificant beginning in the parish of Our Lady should assume vast proportions, spread itself over all France, and, indeed, over all the Catholic world. It was only in January, 1837, that the Confraternity was organized, yet in January, 1840, it numbered 58,940 members. In the beginning of the year 1841 there were enrolled on its books twenty bishops, twenty priests' houses, ten Religious Orders, and forty-six female religious communities. It deserves to be mentioned that of these vast numbers, 21,314 were men."

What contributed much to this extraordinary and rapid development was the fact that Pope Gregory XVI. approved the Association on the 24th of April, 1838, enriched it with generous indulgences and even raised it to the dignity and privileges of an Archconfraternity. By virtue of this dignity it acquired the right of aggregating to itself all other Confraternities founded under the same title and for the same purpose, and of sharing with them the indulgences and other spiritual advantages enjoyed by the parent Society.

To-day this Archconfraternity counts its members by the million, while its affiliated branches throughout the cities, towns, and villages of the Catholic world may be counted by the thousands.

Such unparalleled success and propagation can be explained only by the blessed effects which the Archconfraternity, or rather the Immaculate Heart of Mary, brought down from heaven on Christian souls throughout the Catholic world. Indeed most miraculous blessings were granted, to serve, as it were, as striking evidences of God's extraordinary intervention, by which He not only introduced this Association among men, but even approved it and confirmed it before the eyes of all.

Among these miraculous results we may reckon:

1. Sudden conversions of great sinners on their death-beds.

2. Sudden and complete conversions of sinners and infidels, who, by persevering subsequently in exemplary lives, have left proof of the genuineness of their change of life.

3. Sudden cures of sick persons, whose restoration to health had been despaired of; and

4. More especially the spiritual and moral regeneration of the parish of Our Lady of Victories in Paris.

This congregation, previously so icy-cold in its piety, so reckless in its morals, bloomed forth into a fervor of faith, hope, and charity, soon after the establishment of this Association of prayer. No longer was the parish church dreary and empty. Divine service was attended numerously by working people and trades people who composed the bulk of the parishioners, and with a zeal and piety which astonished the pastors of other even well-regulated and highly religious districts through the country

parts of France. There was hardly a moment in the day that people were not seen praying before our blessed Lady's altar. Against 720 communions received in the church during the year 1835, the year 1837 showed the number of 8900. There has been no abatement since that time. Whole families become solicitous to conscientiously discharge the duties which they had neglected before, and hardly knew or recognized. Young people distinguished by their talents, intelligence and wealth, snap the chains of passion asunder, become heroic in their practice of virtue and resolve to serve Jesus Christ bravely and openly in the face of a corrupt world.

The same gratifying results are perceptible in all those congregations where the Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners has been established.

One of the Archconfraternity's chief sources of blessings, and one by which its spiritual advantages have been extended to the uttermost bounds of the earth, is the system and series of evening devotions held once a week in the Church of Our Lady of Victories, together with the prayers offered at those services for persons and objects designated.

This public service is held at an hour when all the other churches of Paris are closed, and when the giddy youth of the city are in pursuit of enjoyment and pleasure, —commodities that may be procured on all sides in that gay capital. The hour of service is seven all the year round. Hardly has the bell begun to toll when the inhabitants of the district flock in great numbers to the church. Even before the beginning of service there is no spare room in the building, spacious as it is.

The devotions begin with the Vespers of the Sacred

Heart of Mary, during which the whole congregation sings in concert. Then comes a short sermon of about half an hour. At the end of the discourse there is read a list, in separate groups, of all the evils of body and soul occurring during the week and for the relief of which the prayers of the members are respectfully requested.

Truly, to listen to this recital of spiritual and bodily ailments, these private and public sufferings, to hear expressed the anxiety of friends for the bodily and spiritual health of those who are dear to them, must make a solemn and lasting impression on the minds of all present. The Church of Our Lady of Victories at such times may be compared to the healing pool of Bethsaida in Jerusalem, where all kinds of human misery have congregated. With unbounded confidence in the Help of Christians, deeply affected with compassion for all the sufferings and troubles weighing down upon humanity, a choir of a thousand voices cries out to heaven, "Mary, Refuge of Sinners, pray for us!"

Christian reader, you may easily imagine how numerous are the cases needing help from Heaven, and how great is the confidence placed in the prayers of this Association, when you learn that in the month of May, 1875, 103,100 requests were made for such prayers.

5. THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION.

No other Confraternity in the Church has been so abundantly enriched with indulgences as the Confraternity of Our Lady of Consolation, or the "Black Leather Belt" of St. Monica, of St. Augustine and of St. Nicholas of Tolentino.

The badge of this Archconfraternity is a leather girdle. This girdle has, from the beginning, been a symbol of penance, mortification, self-denial and chastity. Holy Scripture tells us distinctly of the prophet Elias that his loins were girt with a leather girdle (4 Kings, i. 8). He was imitated in this respect by Eliseus and other prophets. Also the last and greatest prophet of them all, St. John the Baptist, wore a leather girdle about his loins (Mark i. 6).

It can be proved by history that Mary, the Queen of prophets, wore such a girdle. The ancient likeness of the Blessed Virgin, made by St. Luke, represents her girdled in that way. Indeed the Greek Church celebrates every year two festivals in honor of the "Black Leather Belt" of Mary, namely, on the 2d of July, its discovery, and on the 31st of August, its translation from Jerusalem to the imperial capital, Constantinople, by the Empress Pulcheria, who died on the 11th of September, 453. On the occasion of the translation St. Germanus, patriarch of the same metropolis, delivered a discourse in honor of the relic. The pious empress had a handsome church built in honor of the Blessed Virgin, in which she deposited the girdle for safe-keeping and for the veneration of the faithful. In the year 1118, the Patriarch Euthymius, in a discourse which he delivered on this much venerated girdle, said of it that it had been preserved without decay or injury for more than 900 years.

In the Church of Western Europe the devotion towards Mary's girdle and the custom of wearing it were early introduced, even in the time of St. Monica, who wore it devoutly during the years of her life.

History tells us that this pious and patient mother, after the death of her husband Patricius, implored fer-

vently the ever Blessed Virgin that she would be pleased to reveal to her petitioner the mode of dress which she adopted after the death of her divine Son, that thus Monica, in her widowhood and desolation, might dress as Mary dressed. Hereupon the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Monica, clothed in a long black flowing mantle, with a black girdle about her waist. Mary said to her, "This was my habit during the later years of my life." In holy joy St. Monica hastened to dress according to the image seen in the vision. Soon a number of devout women imitated her style.

St. Augustine himself, after he had been converted to God by the prayers and tears of his holy mother, was invested by St Ambrose, bishop of Milan, with a long black religious habit and a leather girdle. Thus it was that both mother and son, as a sign of a common love for the Queen of heaven, wore the habit of the Blessed Virgin. The same was also the regulation dress of the Order of Hermits founded by St. Augustine.

This devotion of Mary's girdle owed its general diffusion to St. Nicholas of Tolentino, who died on the 10th of September, 1246, and who was a member of the Hermit Order of St. Augustine. This saint at that time was filling the world with his fame for sanctity and power of working miracles. These last were so numerous that at the time of his canonization, in the year 1446, three hundred of them were approved by the Pope. The eloquence and zeal of that great servant of God led such a great number of persons to put on the girdle that in the year 1446 Pope Eugene IV. established in the Augustinian church of St. James in Bologna a special "Confraternity of those who wore the girdle of St. Augustine, of St. Monica and of St. Nicholas of Tolentino," and enriched

the same with great spiritual treasures and graces. In the year 1495, fifty years later, in the same church, an apostolic man, named Martin Vercelli, established still another Confraternity under the title of Our Lady of Consolation. In the year 1570 both Confraternities were merged into one by Thaddeus Perusinus who was at that time General of the Augustinian Order. Pope Gregory confirmed this union by a bull of the 15th of June, 1575, at the same time elevating the united Confraternities to the dignity of an Archconfraternity under the title of Our Lady of Consolation, or Our Lady of the Girdle. This same Pope wished to be the first one to have his name inscribed on the roll of this holy union. So great was the number of graces, privileges and indulgences granted to this union that the same Pope Gregory XIII. said, on referring to that fact, "This is the first and best endowed Confraternity of all Confraternities."

When Don Pedro, viceroy of Naples and ambassador of the king of Spain, was one day taking his leave of Pope Clement X. and, in pursuance of a custom peculiar to such occasions, asked for a special favor, the pope replied, "Have yourself enrolled in the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin's Girdle; there you will find an abundance of favors and indulgences." The high official accepted the proposition with gratitude and, on his arrival home, lost no time in becoming a member, together with his whole family and his whole court. The duties and obligations of this highly privileged Confraternity of Our Lady of Consolation are as follows:

1. In the first place the candidate must have himself invested and enrolled by an authorized priest. This enrolment can be performed either by the head of a properly established Confraternity of Our Lady of Consolation,

which ought, of course, to be duly affiliated to the Archconfraternity at Bologna, or by any other priest enjoying faculties for that purpose.

2. The members should wear the Confraternity girdle about the waist. It should be made of black leather, with a ring of black bone, and should be blessed.

3. Every day the members should say thirteen "Our Fathers" and as many "Hail Marys," with the "Salve, Regina" at the end, for the welfare of the Pope and the spread of the Catholic Church. Usually the twelve first "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" are said in honor of the twelve apostles. The thirteenth is said in honor of Jesus Christ as Founder of one holy Church and Head of the apostles. Those who are unable to say or to read the "Hail, holy Queen" may substitute five "Hail Marys."

4. There are some who are not only members of the Confraternity, but who also wish to be considered its benefactors, receive still other indulgences and have a share in many good works that are done in the Church, and especially in the Religious Orders and communities. In order to be considered a benefactor one must make an offering in money. These little donations are devoted to some pious work. From the duties that the members take upon themselves you may easily learn, Christian reader, the aim and object that God and His holy Church wish to attain by means of this religious union, and the spiritual benefits attached to it.

5. At the blessing of each girdle the priest prays that the Christian who shall wear it, may, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, St. Monica, and St. Augustine, live in the practice of a God-pleasing self-restraint, observing the commandments of God, and that the girdle may be to him a mark of mortification and

purity. Thus the wearing of this belt can be of little use to us unless it act as a monitor and an incentive to imitate Mary and the other saints in mortification and purity and in subjection of our passions.

6. The members should be faithful in saying the prescribed form of prayers, namely, the thirteen "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys," and the "Hail, holy Queen," having for their intention to bring down the blessing of God on His Church.

7. The special patroness of the Confraternity is the Blessed Virgin, who ought to be invoked by the members under the loving title of Our Lady of Consolation, or Mother of Comfort. By this means a special confidence and loving reverence are awakened within the members towards the ever Blessed Virgin. For we have recourse to her in every need, trouble, and danger, whether of life or death; we invoke her especially in the great and violent persecutions of the Church.

With regard to the indulgences granted to this Confraternity, Christian reader, I can only repeat here what I said in the beginning, namely, that they are so great and abundant that many learned and pious men have expressed their astonishment thereat.

6. THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE SEVEN DOLORS OF MARY.

As long as the Blessed Virgin shall be honored by the faithful, so long will she be specially honored as well as loved as the Mother of Sorrows. For where can poor, weeping humanity, groaning under the trials and sufferings of this life, find more encouragement, comfort, and patience, than in Mary's heart, seven times pierced with the sword of grief foretold by Simeon?

A Confraternity having for its expressed object the honoring of the Blessed Virgin in her many great sorrows, originated about the middle of the thirteenth century. You have already read, Christian reader, about the origin of the Order of Servites, or Servants of Mary. (See page 231). As the pious founders and members of that Order were obliged to wear a black habit, with a black Scapular, as a sign of the pains and sorrows of the Mother of God, they also distributed small black Scapulars among the faithful who did not enter the ranks of the Order, but who wished, nevertheless, to acknowledge themselves in some special manner the servants of Mary, and to keep before their memories the thought of her pains and afflictions.

In equal pace with the extraordinary development of the Servite Order did the Confraternity of the Seven Dolors advance on every side and gather in great harvests of pious members, especially among the higher classes. St. Louis, king of France, was a bright ornament of this Association.

As is easy to see, the general and chief object of this Association is that people may contemplate and honor the mysteries of the Seven Sorrows which the Blessed Virgin suffered as the Mother of Jesus, whose persecutions and torments she was called upon to share.

As one of the founders of the Servites, Blessed Alexius, used to say, in terms of admonition, "The members of the Confraternity must not suppose that they do enough when they contemplate the suffering of the sorrowing Mother, and offer her their sympathy. They must, by means of such contemplation, be brought to the firm determination of deploring, avoiding, and forswearing the cause of all these sufferings, which is sin."

7. THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF OUR LADY OF SALETTE.

Even in very recent times has Catholic religious life and its necessary element, devotion to Mary, put forth some beautiful flowers of piety.

Who is not familiar with the history of the apparition at Salette, where the Blessed Virgin was pleased to appear to two poor shepherd children on the mountains of Grenoble in France? Who can fail to recognize in this event a warning voice from heaven?

During a period when human malice and infidelity had reached an alarming height, when Heaven's vengeance was hanging over nations, the Blessed Virgin appeared to point out the approaching punishments and to bid men do penance and become converted. Catholic France, and, indeed, the whole Christian world, felt that a deaf ear could not be turned to the gentle tones of the kindly voice of Mary, nor a hardened heart close itself against her benign influence. In pursuance of her expressed wish, and in the hope of effecting a change in public life for the better, more especially on those points to which she alluded, a Confraternity was soon established under the title of Our Lady of Salette. On the 21st of September, 1852, Pope Pius IX. raised it to the dignity of an Archconfraternity for the whole world, and enriched it with many indulgences.

The threefold object of this pious Association is as follows:

1. To avert, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the Lord's anger, which, on account of the public and scandalous transgression of His commandments, and of the precepts of the Church, had justly come upon mankind.

2. To pray fervently for the conversion of sinners.

3. To labor zealously for one's own sanctification.

Christians of our time are guilty of three great sins: (1) Neglect and desecration of the Sabbath; (2) improper use of God's name; (3) disobedience to the Church by eating flesh-meat on forbidden days. It was the necessity and absolute obligation of avoiding these three sins that Mary, on the mountains of La Salette, insisted on most forcibly, predicting the direst punishments. She commended worship to God, respect for His holy name, and obedience to the laws of the Church, which practices, she said, would be attended by the choicest blessings of Heaven. To work for these ends constitutes the chief duties of members of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Salette.

8. THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF OUR BELOVED LADY, QUEEN OF ANGELS.

Devotion to Mary under this title is not new. In the life of the humble St. Francis Assisi we read that he received from the Fathers of the Benedictine Order a church that had long before been dedicated to the Queen of angels.

The Confraternity of this name, however, is new. It seems to have been appointed by Heaven to become a channel of many branches, through each of which the stream of graces that for five hundred years flowed over the human family, through St. Francis' Church of the Portiuncula, was to be distributed into individual souls.

In July, 1856, the young Count Mary Frederick de Bray lay deathly sick on his bed in the castle of Bellevue, near Toulouse, in France. This pious young man always entertained in his heart a tender devotion for the Blessed Virgin. During his illness he felt an inspiration to utter

a vow that if he recovered he would make a pilgrimage to the Church of Our Lady of Angels, at Assisi.

Meanwhile his illness grew worse, and on the 22d of July the doctors announced that he would not live till night. The sick man did not die. About midnight he suddenly rose from his bed, and, to the astonishment of his mother and sister, said that he was now quite well. On the following morning the doctors declared before the archbishop of Toulouse that the young man's recovery was clearly a miracle, and that they were ready to seal their testimony with their blood.

The young count, after making his promised pilgrimage to Assisi, became a member of the Society of Jesus, feeling himself called to promote devotion to Our Lady of angels. He was most anxious to make the scene of his wonderful recovery a kind of sanctuary to Mary. The castle of Bellevue is situated in a beautiful town called Pouvouxville, not far from Toulouse. His wish was granted. Pius IX. permitted that the Portiuncula indulgence of Assisi might be obtained in the parish church of Pouvouxville. This small and hitherto unknown place became from that time a rallying point for the reverers of the Queen of angels. On the 25th of April, 1863, a small Society of such reverers sprang into existence. In June, 1864, the archbishop of Toulouse issued an ordinance giving his approbation to this Society. As soon as the whole history of the case was laid before the Holy See, Pius IX. approved the Association, first verbally, and later, on the 3d of March, 1871, by a letter which permitted the devotion to be extended throughout France.

The advantages of the Archconfraternity of Our Beloved Lady, Queen of Angels, are as follows :

1. In the first place, the members place themselves

under the protection of the glorious Queen of angels, who will protect the souls under her care against all the assaults of the evil one.

2. They become sharers in the prayers and merits of millions of Christians.

3. They gain many indulgences.

To become a member of this Confraternity and to have a share in its benefits, one must

1. Have his name enrolled in the register of the Society, and

2. He must say every day three "Hail Marys," with the invocation, "Our Lady of angels, pray for us!" To this prayer has been granted an indulgence of forty days.

It is also recommended that members receive holy communion once or twice a month, in unity of intention with the head of the Society. This condition, however, is not necessary to the gaining of the above-mentioned indulgences.

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